仙君在下
XIAN JUN
尽邪修
徒弟总是欺负我
道玄[著]
DAO XUAN

CH1 - A RARE WARMTH (Draft)

Jiang Yinghe rested on the elevated platform listening to the disciple in front of him carry on with his pleasantries that contained a trace of conceit. He slowly massaged his hand, brushing over his fingertips. But his gaze was not affected at all by the other's words.

This person was supposedly a diamond in the rough, a true son of heaven that came only once in a lifetime. His Zhangmen-shixiong beside him was quite pleased with the young man, and quietly said to him, "Xuan Wei, why don't you go with this one?"

After hearing those words, Jiang Yinghe swept his eyes past the area below. He made no sound of agreement.

The youth lost his polite yet arrogant air immediately once he saw that Jiang Yinghe was unimpressed. He paled, and quickly left to lick his wounds elsewhere. The other candidates behind him, however, beamed in anticipation and stepped forward eagerly to replace him.

It's not that Jiang Yinghe doesn't want to take on a disciple, it's just that no one could meet his standards. The criteria was not set by him, but by the 'Ah Jiang's Shizun System' that transmigrated over with him a thousand years ago. If he wanted to ever make it home, he needed to do one of two things: either cultivate three outstandingly gifted and successful students or ascend to immortality without using any tricks by his own power.

Originally he thought that the first method would be easier, but here he is a thousand years later. He's nearly forgotten what Earth was like, and even some of his cultivation peers have passed away. His system, completely uncaring of this, continued to inform him: not talented enough, please do not accept.

The Peng Lai Sect Master helplessly watched as the gifted disciple walked away with an air of disappointment. He glanced at Jiang-shidi's face that seemed to be as cold as ice and sighed, "Send in the next one."

Another youth stood below the platform brimming with confidence, listing how much time he took to build his foundation, how long to break through the Divine Spirit stage..... But Jiang Yinghe remained expressionless, and even took an elegant sip of tea.

The body of the tea was a clear emerald colour, brewed with Blessed Jade Dew carefully gathered from spirit springs. The taste was delicately sweet. Jiang Yinghe tasted a mouthful before glancing down.

[Slightly above average. Does not satisfy the criteria.]

The system highlighted its words. He did not need to personally test them because the 'Little Jiang Shizun System' seemed to have almost impossibly high standards. He has not met a single young cultivator who could even come close in a thousand years.

The blue porcelain made a crisp sound as it was set down. He looked away without sparing a single glance more, saying dismissively, "Not good enough."

The youth who has always been praised as a genius felt like he had been slapped by those words. Stunned, he stared at the elder. In the end, he had no choice but to leave, but his eyes followed Xuan Wei Xianjun the entire time.

It was well known that he had not taken a new disciple in some time, and it was expected that he would only accept the cream of the crop. But as two widely acknowledged talents were rejected mercilessly one after the other, the ones who were quietly taking joy in their failure began to panic.

As expected, the next few disciples with a not insignificant amount of potential were similarly sent away. Jiang Yinghe had not even finished his tea by the time they all left.

He placed a single hand around the cup and looked at the scattered foam floating within. He had already given up on this round of selection.

The Sect Master was still hopeful. He leaned over to remind the one beside him, "Jiang-shidi, this last child is the best of the bunch. His mother is Guang Han Palace's Li Yue Zhenren."

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes from his now cold tea. He saw how this youth's eyes held an unshakeable faith as he bowed to him, seemingly more confident than all the children before him.

"Xuan Wei Xianjun, My name is Cheng Zihan. I built my foundation in only 27 years. Now I have broken past the middle stages of foundation building before 40. My dedication towards the Dao is unshakeable. Please accept me as a disciple!"

Low murmurs and exclamations erupted from below the stage.

"Only 27 years? How could he be that fast?"

"You don't know? His mother is Li Yue Zheren. What was it again..... Oh! He's called Hundred Year Genius Cheng Zihan!"

"So impressive ah. He'll definitely be able to become the Xianjun's disciple right?"

The discussions were barely above a whisper, but to those with Jiang Yinghe's level of cultivation it might as well have been said right next to him. He glanced at the other, and was about to open his mouth to reject him out of habit when the system, which has always remained steadfast, suddenly sounded a deafening alarm. It was so loud that the tea in his cup slightly swayed.

[Target located! Assessment result is 'gifted beyond words'.]

Jiang Yinghe immediately focused. After a short pause, he set aside his tea and rose.

His seated profile was already enough to captivate others, but when he descended the platform no one was able to look away. The audience became flustered.

Peng Lai Sect opened its doors once every ten years to accept new disciples, but this is the first time in a millennium that Xuan Wei Xianjun personally came to collect someone. For a cultivator of the younger generation, this was an unprecedented honour.

Many envious gazes fell on Chen Zihan. They wished that the one standing there was them.

The snowy white outer robe on Jiang Yinghe's body seemed to billow out as if caught in a light breeze that also gently embraced his inky black hair.

A cold, ephemeral beauty.

Chen Zihan's heart was almost beating out of his chest, as if it wanted to explode out of sheer joy. In front of him was the only elder at the Weakened Cave stage in the entire Peng Lai sect. He was an idol for many young cultivators, not to mention himself. He was the role model that pushed him to excel beyond his limits, a pillar of his consciousness.

Xuan Wei Xianjun, Jiang Yinghe. He savoured the taste of that name in his mind. When the other voiced his acceptance, an extreme sense of pride tingled as it ran up his spine. Out of all the people here, only I am worthy of being in his eyes.

Jiang Yinghe came to a stop in front of him, but his gaze had already passed by. In a light tone, he said, "Not good enough, leave."

The youth felt his mind come to a crashing halt as his stomach dropped. All the blood in his body ceased to circulate at this moment.

The audience was not much better off. A shocked silence followed those simple words.

"I.....why?" Cheng Zihan asked in a hoarse voice, "Why don't you want me? I....."

He couldn't finish his sentence.

Jiang Yinghe had already passed him without hesitation, bringing the cold fragrance that surrounded him away as well, leaving as enigmatically as he had come. He came to the edge of the platform, facing the farthest edge where there were few spectators present.

Jiang Yinghe carefully examined the youth in black clothing. No wonder the system described him as 'talented beyond words'. He announced, "I don't want him..... I want you."

His voice was as light as smoke, but also carried the slight chill of frost and snow. Neither fast nor slow, the next sentence rang out.

"Are you willing to become a disciple of my Xuan Wei school?"

The gaze of the crowd shifted onto the youth, who only now looked towards the stage, lifting his head slowly to reveal a beautifully chiseled face and a pair of blood-red eyes.

At this moment, all the spectators' mouth dropped open in shock. There was only one person with such demonic eyes in the righteous Peng Lai Immortal sect, and that was the newly accepted Li Huanhan who has a heavenly demon physique.

The last cultivator with a heavenly demon physique was the Xuehe Demon Lord from thousands of years ago who was just steps away from ascension. The reason that Peng Lai sect accepted him was probably just to prevent another terrible scourge from being unleashed unto the world by guiding him onto the righteous path.

How can the Xianjun choose him? How can this kind of person be allowed to be a disciple of Jiang Yinghe?! He's not worthy!

But despite this Jiang Yinghe was still placidly standing at the edge, as if waiting for the other to reply. And before the youth could do so, the person behind him gave voice to the questions in everyone's hearts.

"Him? Someone with a heavenly demon physique? Forgive me for being blunt, Jiang Xianjun, but he is unworthy of being your disciple!" Cheng Zihan stepped forward agitated, unable to control the anger in his words, "Xianjun would rather choose a trash like him over me?! There's no way this disciple can accept that! I came to Peng Lai sect because of your reputation, which cannot be stained by this kind of person! People like him should just go..."

Die. He was unable to utter that last word.

A blanket of silence once again covered the area. Even the sound of a needle falling could be heard.

A completely snow white ice sword was floating in mid air, its bone-chilling edge pressed against Cheng Zihan's eye. The extreme cold made his eyelashes all freeze over.

The killing intent of one that has trained for a thousand years, even if just for a second, can send shivers down your whole body.

"Whoever this master choses," Jiang Yinghe stated as he raised his hand to recall the snow sword Wangchen to his personal dimension, "needs not to be justified to others."

When Wangchen disappeared, the temperature of the surroundings returned to normal. Cheng Zihan had already collapsed as all his muscles failed him. That feeling of being so close to death was not something an unbloodied foundation-building disciple could withstand.

Jiang Yinghe didn't even look at him any longer. He turned and held out a hand to the black-clothed youth. "Come."

That pair of blood-red eyes met his like a discreet probe. Finally, under everyone's gazes, he leaped onto the platform in front of Jiang Yinghe. The

entire Xiao You Peak fell into a frozen state.

The cold fragrance continued to linger.

There was another person's hand on top of Jiang Yinghe's, bringing with it another person's warmth. It was something he rarely came into contact with.

He looked on as those distinguishing eyes bore into him with a cold light. A deep but steady voice rang out, "Yes."

Author's Corner

System: Do you know which job is the most dangerous for Ah Jiangs?

Jiang Yinghe: ...Suddenly I don't really want to know.

OceanofPDF.com

CH2 - A KEEPSAKE FOR SHIZUN (Draft)

Under the thundering sky, a never-ending torrent of rain was currently being unleashed on the cliffside where Jiang Yinghe stood silently.

Despite the stormy weather around him, his snow white cloak remained untouched by the elements, with not even a raindrop able to approach him. He gazed towards the impermeable clouds that surrounded the upper layers of the Typhoon Blade Cliffs.

His disciple was still not out yet.....

This kind of place was meant for cultivators far beyond his level. Even if he is a genius that surpasses the heavens, there's nothing he can possibly do when faced with such an insurmountable degree of difficulty. After all, he only entered the sect two years ago...

These two years were not easy for him. Li Huanhan had both his identity and qualifications scrutinized by not only the members of the Peng Lai Immortal Sect, but the entire cultivation world. Li Yue Zhenren even came personally to inquire about this matter. She did not have the courage to directly confront Jiang Yinghe, so she could only direct her discontent to the Sect Master.

Only Jiang Yinghe truly comprehended the astounding talent of his disciple. It only took him two years from the beginning of Qi Condensation to successfully complete the stage. It was a feat few have accomplished in modern history.

He was always reticent and avoided small talk, but who would have thought that he would head straight for the Typhoon Blade Cliffs after his latest breakthrough!

The Typhoon Blade Cliffs were a training ground for inner circle sword disciples to test their mettle. Even those at the Divine Spirit stage or Golden Core stage were at risk of losing their lives here. This is his first time training outside, so why did he choose here?

Jiang Yinghe's heart was filled with a multitude of emotions. This child was still young, it was enough if he knew his own limits and retreated. Even if his disciple did get hurt, nothing bad could happen because he was here.

Jiang Yinghe once again glanced at the faraway clouds out of concern. Although Li Huanhan did not say much since accepting him as his Shizun, it was clear that he was a diligent and righteous child despite having a heavenly demon physique.

The clouds dispersing in an explosion of light interrupted Jiang Yinghe's musings. The vicious winds and raging storm immediately settled into a fresh breeze accompanied by a light drizzle.

Did he complete it? Jiang Yinghe could not hide his surprise. The next moment, the unmistakable scent of blood coated his surroundings. A pair of dark red eyes met his.

The usually thoughtful and calm gaze now contained a trace of polar-cold wrath. Killing intent lazily drifted from a body covered in countless bleeding wounds.

Li Huanhan stood in front of him.

Jiang Yinghe unconsciously moved to support the injured disciple he had waited a millennium for. He intoned in a low voice, "You do not need to pretend to be strong in front of me."

The grey 'Little Jiang Shizun System' at the top right corner of his vision suddenly had a blood-red 'Han' character as well as a progress bar below it.

The bar was barely filled.

Is it estimating the degree of progress he made raising his disciples? After a thousand years of cultivation, Jiang Yinghe had long calmed his heart to remain distant from worldly matters. He did not place his hope on returning home on the system, which is why this change aroused only curiosity instead of alarm.

As expected, Li Huanhan was running on fumes right now. He leaned slightly into his master's embrace. Slowing opening his dark red eyes, a swirl of demonic energy was brewing inside.

Jiang Yinghe did not see this, he only heard his strained voice.

"Shizun," he called out quietly, "this disciple wants to ask why you accepted him that day."

This was something Jiang Yinghe thought he would ask about two years ago. It seems that the other had been biding his time to ascertain if it was safe before gradually letting down his guard.

Jiang Yinghe acutely grasped this point. He reached out a hand and began to stroke his disciple's hair softly. To him, this was what a good Shizun would do at this moment.

Li Huanhan's body stiffened, "......Shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe made a sound of acknowledgement and responded sincerely, "I chose you based on your unique aptitude."

The person beside him was momentarily silent, "Based on the heavenly demon physique?"

"What about the heavenly demon physique?" Said Jiang Yinghe, "This master believes it is a fine quality."

Despite the weather calming down for now, it would soon pick up again in a few hours until the next person clears the peaks.

The vast expanse of clouds allowed a few streams of dawn light through to fall onto his snow white sleeves.

Li Huanhan stared at that sleeve and wordlessly smiled. It has been many years since such an expression graced his features. Never did he think a righteous immortal cultivator would describe the heavenly demon physique as 'a fine quality'.

The people who praised it in the past only wanted to kill him and take it for themselves.

Jiang Yinghe did not notice the ambiguous undertone of the other's gaze. He sought out that hand lined with streaks of dried blood and channeled spiritual energy through it, lightly stating, "This master's disciples must be true sons of heaven."

The words settled comfortably in his body along with the spiritual energy.

"Your fate is forever your own. Not even the heavens can take that from you."

—-

Li Huanhan was a cultivation maniac.

Ever since the 'Clearing of the Typhoon Sword Peaks incident' 38 years ago, the disciples of Peng Lai sect have been reminded again and again of this fact. He was completely merciless in progressing his cultivation, speeding through the stages at a pace that put his seniors to shame.

Those that once said he was not worthy of being Jiang Xianjun's disciple had their faces slapped until even their mothers wouldn't be able to recognize them. Even the one who used to be praised as the 'hundred year genius Cheng Zihan' was defeated with just one move from Li-shixiong.

.....If he wasn't Xuan Wei Xianjun's disciple, and his techniques as polished as they were, people might have suspected he was secretly practicing the demonic way based on his progress.

But Li Huanhan couldn't care less for the opinions of others.

He raised the blood-coloured sword in his hand and admired the fresh blood dripping from its edge. The' senior' who supposedly came to 'educate' him was kowtowing on the ground gasping out apologies while writhing like a spineless worm from his wounds.

His consideration for his Shizun's reputation was the only reason Li Huanhan did not kill him then and there.

All the blood on the sword was swallowed into it as he flicked its body. He turned, and the surrounding disciples immediately cleared a wide path and watched with wary and fearful eyes as he left.

Only when they could no longer see his shadow did someone dare to carry the injured person to receive medical treatment. Despite the lingering fear in his heart, one disciple put up a distaining façade and said, "You dare to challenge our Peng Lai's Li-shixiong only a hundred years after forming your golden core? Did you come here to commit suicide?"

The green-clad teen on the other side nodded, "There's nothing impressive about a golden core. When our shixiong was just a Divine Spirit cultivator, he executed someone of a higher level with ease! Go back to whichever hole you crawled out of to rebuild your golden core. It would be too troublesome to explain why a fellow comrade died."

These harsh words were spoken to discourage him due to the good reputation his Ying Zhou sect held. The person who spoke first felt his temper flare and continued, "Have you no shame coming around and causing trouble with only this much strength? At the sword conference, our Li-shixiong cut through people like you like he was chopping lettuce..."

After hearing that, the other assisting Peng Lai disciple's face dropped, "You just had to remind me of that. Didn't the competition within our sect turn out the same way? I almost have psychological trauma because of him....."

On the other side, Li Huanhan recalled his sword and pushed open Qing Jing Peak's main entrance. It was already nighttime.

There was a candle lit. The wax was made from the fat of spirit beasts residing at the bottom of the ocean. One could be used for more than a century without going out. The candlelight illuminated a dais where Jiang Yinghe was currently reading.

His hair was down, with a few fine strands resting softly on his shoulders. Others circled around his white collar, giving off a sensual feeling.

Li Huanhan stared for a long time. He only moved forward and opened the candle cover when the door behind him closed automatically.

Jiang Yinghe raised his head when the light rays shifted. He saw how the flame suddenly roared to life as his disciple circled it with a finger.

Li Huanhan returned the candle cover to its place and calmly explained, "Reading in dimly lit conditions is harmful to the eyes."

This did not improve the feelings a student should feel towards his teacher in his heart. Rather, Li Huanhan thought that the scene before him was truly enchanting, as if it was from a painting.

Jiang Yinghe thought that his actions were counterintuitive, but since his disciple has always been warm and attentive towards him for the past few decades, he did not have the heart to reject his care.

He set down the manual in his hand and said, "Zhangmen-shixiong informed me that the Tai Xu secret realm that opens once every 60 years is about to appear. Are you willing to go there and guide your fellow disciples?"

Li Huanhan turned to glance at Jiang Yinghe, pausing as he looked at those eyes that seemed to shine like stars.

He actually doesn't feel any of the so-called camaraderie with the other disciples here. In fact, he did not consider himself a Peng Lai cultivator at

all. This was just a place to further his cultivation, it was just a place to.....

There was a soft light in Jiang Yinghe's eyes. The inky black orbs that usually seemed to be submerged in cold water only had a hint of warmth when he looked at him.

Li Huanhan's mood changed in an instant as he was pulled into a trance-like state by that person. He then quickly looked away, "Yes."

Jiang Yinghe inclined his head. His disciple was so considerate towards his martial siblings. Although he was a man of few words, his heart was in the right place. Just now, the disciple building progress bar rose slightly and was now at 60 percent.

It seems that a good Shizun must remember to be empathetic and instill trust in their disciples to improve their mental wellbeing.

"I will also be leaving." Jiang Yinghe thought for a moment before continuing, "Yun province thousands of li away is experiencing an outbreak of ghosts. Rogue cultivators have already come to ask for assistance. I will head there with Yan-shijie tomorrow."

This Yan-shijie was Peng Lai sect's only female Zhenren. Her title was Chang Ning.

Li Huanhan made a grunt of acknowledgement. While he was walking to Jiang Yinghe's side, he noticed that Wangchen was placed on the originally empty mantle. He asked, "Shizun?"

"Nn?"

"Did Wangchen not have a sword pendant to begin with?"

To any sword cultivator, their sword was one of their most precious belongings. Oftentimes they would be adorned by a sword pendant made out of jade handmade by their owners. Usually Wangchen resided in Jiang Yinghe's personal dimension, so Li Huanhan only noticed now that there were no such decorations present.

Jiang Yinghe honestly had no idea how to make that kind of thing, which was why his sword remained bare until now. He also looked over, "No. I am not skilled at making them."

He did not intend to read anymore tonight, so Li Huanhan put out the candle he lit.

In the dark and silent room, a shadow with a familiar scent climbed into the bed.

Cultivators with the heavenly demon physique were especially prone to qi deviations due to their turbulent inner energies. Jiang Yinghe sensed that there was such an imbalance in the other's body right now.

Li Huanhan put his hand in his, bringing with it a bit of residual warmth.

Spiritual energy poured into the other's meridians, slowly guiding the slightly askew forces back. Jiang Yinghe recalled that his inner energies have often been out of place lately. He was about to remind him to be careful when his disciple spoke in a serious tone.

"This disciple will make a sword pendant for Shizun." He said while shifting closer enough for Jiang Yinghe to feel a hot breath brush past his white neck, "Then Shizun will be reminded of me every time he sheaths it in his body."

Author's Corner

Li Huanhan: .....Every time Shizun sheaths it in his body.....

Sword Pendant: Don't use that kind of phrase to describe me!!! qaq

OceanofPDF.com

CH3 - THE INEDIBLE (Draft)

The next morning.

There were dozens of newly minted Divine Spirit stage disciples waiting inside the Peng Lai palace hall.

They were all notable characters from this generation, and they would become the foundation of Peng Lai in the future. Some might even become heroes known throughout the cultivation world later on. However, they were all still wet behind the ears with spirited faces that only the young could make.

"Which Golden Core stage senior do you think will lead us this time?" A female disciple with her hair in a snaketail asked softly, " Xiao'an-shixiong is always the first to know about these things, do you have any ideas?"

Her anticipation was barely hidden, and she wondered aloud, "Could it be Zhou-shixiong? I heard that he recently exited seclusion. Maybe it's because he broke through a bottleneck and formed his..."

The youthful cultivator she called Xiao'an-shixiong turned around to look at her with a face full of grievances. The air around him was different from the others. He sighed deeply, and snapped, "It's Li Huanhan-shixiong."

The female disciple was not even finished saying the words 'golden core' before she was stunned into silence.

"Li, Li-shixiong....."

Li Huanhan's reputation in the Peng Lai sect preceded him. That maniac who cared only for furthering his cultivation. Even if he was strong enough to be called the best cultivator below the Nascent Soul stage, he only had

eyes for his Shizun, Xuan Wei Xianjun. To everyone else, he was aloof and acted as if he was in the presence of an infectious cultivation wastrel.

While she was recovering from the shocking announcement, the giant palace doors behind them opened to reveal the inner hall. Sect master Zhou, Chang Ning Zhenren and Xuan Wei Xianjun were seated on the elevated stage. Beside his master's snowy white outline was the dark profile of Li Huanhan.

...It's really Li-shixiong. The disciples that were originally cheerfully chatting away were now deathly silent like they were being choked by an invisible hand. The female disciple before felt the edges of her vision turn black, and she felt like she might faint any moment now.

The sect master seated on the other side placidly looked to the far away disciples and said to Jiang Yinghe, "I've gone over all that needs to be said. Let's let the children leave."

To Zhou Zhengping's generation, these cultivators that were not even a hundred years old were truly just children.

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly and turned to look at his disciple. Li Huanhan was staring at him with indecipherable emotions in his blood-red eyes.

Based on his understanding of Li Huanhan, he thought that the other was somewhat nervous, which is why he patted his disciple on the shoulder and comforted, "No need to think too hard about this task. All who are present know of your harmonious relationship with your sect siblings. The outer layer of the Tai Xu secret realm is not dangerous if you are careful. This master believes in you."

Jiang Yinghe's tone was distant and chilly, but it thawed slightly when speaking to Li Huanhan. There was no sound array present in the inner palace, so the waiting disciples received the phrase 'harmonious relationship' with complicated expressions.

They didn't know if they should spit blood at the thought of Li-shixiong's 'harmonious relationship' with them or be jealous that he could receive this

kind of unique treatment from Xuan Wei Xianjun.

Li Huanhan looked down at the fingers resting on his shoulder. They were long and thin with the pure luster of frost. That subtle and cold fragrance seemed to be everywhere.

It's the scent of Jiang Yinghe's spiritual breath.

Li Huanhan lifted his hand to cover the one on his shoulder, cradling those fingers in his palm. He stared momentarily at the ground before answering, "This disciple will do his best."

Jiang Yinghe nodded until he heard the sentence that followed.

"After all, in more than a millennium.....I'm the only disciple Shizun has accepted."

This was the truth, so Jiang Yinghe was about to voice his agreement until he noticed that the 'Han' progress bar suddenly advanced a huge chunk. There was still a bit more to go until the next milestone. The 'A Jiang Shizun System' immediately informed him:

[You have encountered a key term: {only}]

Jiang Yinghe paused to take that information in for a second before replying, "Yes, you are this master's only disciple."

The progress bar jumped to 70 percent. But this increase raised Jiang Yinghe's suspicions about what exactly this display was measuring for the first time:

...My disciple is only at the Golden Core stage, but this progress bar is shooting up like it's strapped to a rocket. Isn't this a bit too...fast?

—-

The ghost city of Yun province.

When Jiang Yinghe arrived, this city had already been subsumed by ghostly miasma.

Since ancient times, Yun province has been the playground of ghosts. However, until recently it was still possible for mortals to live apart from those who practiced ghost cultivation. Now it seemed like a dam had been broken and the newly born ghosts were able to cross over and terrorize the living; often in horrifying, violent ways.

Chang Ning Zhenren Yan Caiwei stood by his side, holding a spirit dispelling bell in her hands. When the bell sounded, the surrounding miasma was greatly weakened. She turned to look in Jiang Yinghe's direction and said, "Jiang-shidi, could you..."

Before she finished, a snow-coloured sword swept through the air in a graceful arc. It cleaved all the resentful ghosts and miasma it came into contact with, leaving behind a peaceful silence.

Yan Caiwei was stunned. She recalled the bell with a blank expression and shook her sleeves out, "Shidi clearly doesn't need help, so I'll go tend to the injured."

With that, the purple-clad Yan Caiwei left to meet up with the righteous cultivators dispatched by the other sects.

Standing inside the ghost city, Jiang Yinghe noticed a suspicious place when recalling Wangchen.

The miasma had yet to disperse in the center of the city, and there was a convulsing, shapeless mass of flesh giving off a sinister aura there. Jiang Yinghe approached it with his sword unsheathed, feeling like he was approaching a BOSS in one of those video games he used to play on Earth.

The meatball spasmed for some time. It was almost surprisingly ugly.

Jiang Yinghe threw a purifying talisman over with no effect. He then proceeded to split the pile of viscera with a single strike. Blood and gore

sprayed everywhere, and the meatball gave off a few death rattles before becoming still. Inside was a curled up body.

It appeared to be an unconscious youth. At first glance, Jiang Yinghe thought that this was an unfortunate cultivator who was devoured, so he reached out a hand to pull them out.

The remaining flesh clinging to the body peeled away, and a body that still had some residual warmth fell into his embrace. They seemed to wake up, and suddenly embraced him.

It was like a newborn hugging their mother.

Qin Jun had never imagined waking up like this.

The cold darkness had been his sole companion since he was sealed thousands of years ago. But now, he was being held by a fragrant, delicious soul. He reflexively swallowed. A pair of endless eyes slowly opened to a blinding shade of white.

The unspeakable pain of rebuilding his body was slowly ebbing away. The memory of being struck by heavenly lightning still played out on loop in his mind, but those arms offered him quiet comfort.

So fragrant ah.....

Was this top-level soul's embrace part of the standard reincarnation package?

Qin Jun could feel an itch in his gums. He was very weak right now, and his consciousness was barely there. There was an all-consuming desire to bite the person in front of him, to lick his enticing soul and make him a part of himself...

That's what he thought, so that's what he did.

The moment Jiang Yinghe came into contact with the other, the system sent out a notification sound, saying that this unknown man had absolute potential and to accept him as a disciple. He was pleasantly surprised that

he'd managed to fish out a target like this. When he took the other's wrist to estimate his age, he was bitten by this child.

He felt teeth sink into his collar bone and blood spill out.

This miasma-encrusted person, who couldn't be more than twenty, had quite the jaw.

Jiang Yinghe hissed softly, but he continued to hold the person in his arms and even began patting him on his back, saying, "Don't be afraid, I came to rescue you. Those malicious spirits have already been purified."

The person stiffened, as if Jiang Yinghe had said something inconceivable to him.

Jiang Yinghe thought that he was frightened. He decided, in light of this being the second sprout approved by the system, to patiently continue to comfort him.

"You will be safe by my side."

Qin Jun froze. He was covered head to toe in miasma and rotting wounds, and yet this person was still kind enough to try and pacify him.

This was an unprecedented situation for Qin Jun. He was stunned, and his thoughts became fractured.

He bit this person only to be rewarded with warmth and security, where was the logic in this? Qin Jun continued to lap at the bite mark as he pondered.

After being licked several more times, Jiang Yinghe asked, "Are.....you hungry?"

Qin Jun rested his head on his shoulder, his voice delayed for a second. "Mm."

The taste was divine plus the man was a saint. He just made the people around him want to gobble him up until there was nothing left.

Jiang Yinghe believed that anyone who had experienced that kind of situation would be timid and afraid, so his straightforward audacity was astounding. He placed a hand on his injured collarbone and healed the slightly red teeth marks with spiritual energy.

Qin Jun continued to lie in his lap and stare at his long fingers with a hidden, appraising and somewhat covetous gaze. Then the steel gray eyes quickly closed with restraint.

He couldn't eat him...for now.

Author's Corner

Qin Jun: Shizun smells so nice I'm so hungry.

OceanofPDF.com

CH4 - A COLD SPRING (Draft)

Jiang Yinghe never suspected that the 'hunger' the gray-haired youth he had rescued from a ball of meat spoke of was not strictly referring to the consumption of food.

Qin Jun was lying in a room that was separated in two by a paper screen.

Jiang Yinghe sat together with Yan Caiwei. Many comrades came to express their gratitude to the duo for their assistance and guidance after they finished dealing with the rampant miasma in the area.

During this procession, there was a Primordial God level Zhenren from Yao Wang valley that assessed Qin Jun's state.

"This person has an outstanding spiritual root that is suitable for immortal cultivation. It's just that his entire body is permeated with miasma. Once a person has been corrupted by countless spirits like this, without vigilant correction of their meridians," he sighed, "they would likely succumb to qi deviations and become a resentful ghost cultivator."

These observations agreed with Jiang Yinghe's own findings. He nodded slightly and asked, "Is there a cure?"

"To pacify the miasma, an elder of the Weakened Cave stage or above must feed him their spiritual blood. When this child breaks past the Nascent Soul stage by himself, he would naturally be freed from its influence."

Jiang Yinghe immediately recalled how the other gnawed on his collarbone the day he rescued him. He must have innately wanted to return to the righteous path.

He nodded. Only after bidding farewell to the Zhenren did he turn to meet Yan Caiwei's gaze, "What does Shijie think?"

In the past ten days, Yan Caiwei comforted many who were hurt and exorcised many evil spirits. Touched by her efforts, the civilians of An Province began praying to her as if she was a deity. These days she has been troubled over how to politely reject their eager offerings.

She sighed, "You need to let him consume your essence every once in a while if he's taken in by the sect. Will Li Huanhan accept that?"

Jiang Yinghe said, "Then he can become my second disciple."

Yan Caiwei stared at him incredulously, "It hasn't even been a century since the first one. The people of the cultivation world will begin vying for a position at your side again."

Jiang Yinghe looked beyond the paper screen and lightly stated, "This was truly a fated meeting between us. I do not accept those who are ordinary."

Yan Caiwei thought about all the arrogant yet talented youth who had tried to apprentice under Jiang-shidi in the last thousand years. She then compared their current progress in cultivation to that Li Huanhan with the heavenly demon physique. She finally sighed in admiration for both Jiang Yinghe's judgement and luck.

"...Is it that birds of a flock fly together?" She shook her head, "No matter who you take in, Zhangmen-shixiong will probably be too pleased to sleep for a night. But these two children, one with the heavenly demon physique, the other corrupted by countless spirits.....An outsider would think that you were a humanitarian.

Jiang Yinghe rubbed his tea cup for a while, "It's more like I'm helping those who cannot help themselves."

The person in question woke up from his regenerative trance following those words. He shifted slightly.

Jiang Yinghe stood up and went around the paper screen to immediately be confronted by the steel-gray eyes of the youth. His features were sharp and defined, with a calculated edge in his gaze.

He sat on one side of the bed and said calmly, "Come with me to Peng Lai."

His words were straight to the point with no room for interpretation. Before the other could reply, Jiang Yinghe added, "If you don't want to cultivate the immortal path, your body will rot in three to five years. Although this road may be hard, it can extend your lifespan dramatically."

In Jiang Yinghe's experience, this was the most alluring thing for ordinary people. The ability to shake the heavens and move the earth were too far away to even be comprehensible for them, so concrete examples tend to work best.

But the other showed little reaction to this. The steel-gray eyes continued to stare at him like a wild animal or evil spirit with the intention of toying with their prey.

Jiang Yinghe took his silence as agreement. He looked down and slid his left thumb across his right index finger. The snowy white skin parted immediately to reveal a vibrant red liquid.

He offered his hand to Qin Jun's mouth and softened his voice, "I was the one who rescued you, so I have no reason to harm you."

The metallic eyes blinked once they saw the attractive red points. He licked his lips as both his currently weakened spirit and core were transfixed by the fragrance in front of him.

Blood spilled onto his lips as Qin Jun took Jiang Yinghe's fingertip into his mouth. He had no shortage of dealings with those self-righteous immortal cultivators before his hibernation, but this was the first time that he was attracted in this way.

In his opinion, the inner conflicts of the righteous way were no less vicious and underhanded than those of their counterpart. There was no one as

unblemished as the one before him. Others only spoke those pleasant, idealistic words, so how did this person have the courage to actually make them a reality?

Qin Jun's tongue caressed the wound, secretly enjoying the exquisite beauty of this soul. He suddenly spat out Jiang Yinghe's finger and shifted towards him.

Jiang Yinghe did not shy away. There was no need to be too cautious with how weak this person was. This was just a civilian who had just endured.....

His mind went blank as the other embraced him.

He's so desperate for comfort. Ever since he was rescued, he hasn't said a single word about his parents. They were probably killed by the rampaging ghosts. Jiang Yinghe let out a sigh in his heart. If something this tragic happened in the well-adjusted and peaceful modern society, it would be pitiful enough to get government assistance.

Wait, what was government assistance again.....? Jiang Yinghe had been in this world for more than a millennium, so some memories had faded with time. He was just thinking 'this child really is pitiable' when he was bitten again on his collarbone.

Jiang Yinghe, "Is your zodiac sign the dog?"

The person in his arms was too busy opening a hole over his sternum with his teeth to reply. He savoured and lapped at the blood that oozed out.

Although losing this much blood wasn't life-threatening to Jiang Yinghe, it still hurt. He furrowed his brows and decided that he couldn't be bitten in vain. Reaching out a hand, he patted Qin Jun and commanded, "Call me Shizun."

The movements at his neck paused, and Jiang Yinghe could hear a throaty chuckle. It was strange because the other person's facial expression never changed the entire time.

Qin Jun slowly looked over at him, thinking deeply about something. It was quite a while before he said, "Shizun saving this disciple's life is something that Qin Jun will never forget."

—-

By the time Jiang Yinghe returned to Peng Lai, the An province ghost city had been cleansed by the combined efforts of many righteous cultivators. A great number of resentful ghosts were settled, and the surrounding area gradually became peaceful again.

When the sect master Zhou Zhengping Zheren heard that he accepted another disciple, he was as happy as an old man like him could be. He even personally came for a visit, only to be stared down by Qin Jun's unnerving gray eyes.

How was this child just like his Shixiong? He looked at Jiang-shidi as if he was a tasty piece of meat while everyone else was met with silent contempt.

Nonetheless, for the sake of building up Peng Lai's future generation, Zhou Zhengping heaped praises upon Qin Jun. It was only after he had finished that Yan Caiwei deigned to tell him how this new disciple was corrupted by countless spirits and was even more unstable than the other one. Who knows when he'll succumb to a qi deviation.....

Zhou Zhengping looked at Jiang Yinghe who was wearing his usual expression. He managed to force out, ".....This child must have other outstanding qualities."

This was something Jiang Yinghe already knew. He nodded with visible pride.

But with his body that was barely patched together with spiritual energy, not even a shred of toughness or talent could be discerned from the gray-haired Qin Jun beside him.

Zhou Zhengping: "....."

Until he left, the Sect Master could be heard murmuring under his breath with a troubled expression how grim the future of Peng Lai looked.....

Then Qin Jun established his foundation in record breaking time and slapped everyone's face again.

Just two years again, the entirety of Peng Lai grumbled. Just when they thought they could get a few years of peace and quiet now that Li-shixiong was away leading the secret realm training exercise, this Qin-shixiong tripped them all up. Are all these Qing Jing disciples even human?

That last part was true. The disciples of Qing Jing Peak were not human.

Jiang Yinghe thought that this rate of improvement was a given based on the high standards of the system. Right now, he was staring at the second red progress bar, entitled 'Jun', slowly rising. Every time he shed his blood to cleanse the miasma in the other's body, it would jump forward an increment.

Jiang Yinghe thought with satisfaction: it seems that taking care of the health of his disciples was the right way to go.

When he was evaluating Qin Jun's martial techniques, his wrist was suddenly grabbed by his second disciple.

He normally spoke very little and avoided unnecessary situations. So he must have something to say this time.

Jiang Yinghe raised his head and guessed, "Is your foundation unstable?"

Qin Jun nodded, "Somewhat."

Jiang Yinghe directed his spiritual energy into his body to surround his core. He soon found dark traces of miasma around it.

No matter how he tried to purify it over the last two years, the ghostly energy seemed firmly entrenched. Like a persistent weed, it grew back each time.

Jiang Yinghe lightly furrowed his brows while patiently extracting the miasma. He thought about ways to strengthen the body of his disciple when a warmth landed on his shoulder.

It was Qin Jun who had leaned over. He stared for a while at Jiang Yinghe's snow-white throat before saying, "This disciple constantly causes trouble for Shizun. I....."

"Hush."

Jiang Yinghe focused on guiding his spiritual energy to disentangle the threads surrounding the core. He then followed with, "You don't need to feel guilty. As long as you behave morally in the future and become a kind person like Zhangmen-shixiong said....."

A kind person..... To someone like Qin Jun it was like an amusing joke. He was entirely focused on Jiang Yinghe as he finally figured out why he was so different from any other righteous cultivator.

Although he seemed cold and distant on the surface, he was mature and warm inside. He had almost infinite patience for others, and was a diehard optimist.

This was all the more apparent when contrasted with someone like himself.

Receiving special treatment from someone like this sent a rush of satisfaction throughout this evil spirit's body.

He was used to Jiang Yinghe's scent and comfortably nuzzled closer, allowing Jiang Yinghe to take out the actually negligible amount of miasma present in his body.

At that exact moment, the main doors of the Qing Jing residence opened, letting in the bright outside light and a black-clothed shadow.

Li Huanhan stood at the entrance with a thick metallic scent surrounding him. His clothes were ripped in several places, and blood was freely flowing from his wounds, down onto his tightly closed fist.

"Shizun." a flash of ruthlessness passed through those red eyes, "......Who is this?"

His blood traced the gaps in his fingers before falling to the ground. The jade sword pendant in his hand was stained crimson.

This was the cold jade mirror stone found in the inner layer of the Tai Xu secret realm, an ancient artifact that had been preserved perfectly until now. When Li Huanhan removed it from the surrounding black ice, the entire secret realm dispersed like smoke.

On the way back, he practiced tying knots countless times until he perfected the sword pendant. Every time he glanced at it, his heart started to beat faster.

His selfish and possessive nature came out to play.

Alas, although it was spring by the time he came back, it felt like Qing Jing Peak was the epicenter of a winter storm.

Author's Corner

How can I blame you for making a mistake when it's my fault for giving you too much lenience?

Weather prediction for next chapter: cloudy with a 100% percent chance for drama. The second last sentence translated literally as monopolize and I immediately thought of Li Huanhan as Mr. Monopoly lol.

OceanofPDF.com

CH5 - I WANT TO EAT HIM (Draft)

Jiang Yinghe felt a trace of frost from the other's words, which was unusual considering the normally even temper of his first disciple.

His gaze swept over the dark red traces on Li Huanhan's body. Concerned, he sent out his consciousness only to find that the man's cultivation was unharmed. He then said, "This is your shidi, Qin Jun."

Li Huanhan strode to where the gray-haired youth was standing, an unspoken challenge in his eyes. He paused, and commented, "This Qin-shidi seems to be injured."

He didn't know why he said that. Before he got back, he thought that his injuries were unsightly. Even though they didn't hurt, he wanted to hide them from Jiang Yinghe. But now, facing such a situation, he wanted Shizun to take a look at him.

The inner layer of the secret realm was a place few dared to tread. The news of him retrieving the mirror keystone has probably already spread like wildfire to the various major sects. But Li Huanhan didn't care in the slightest about the opinion of outsiders, whether good or bad.

Yet at this moment, Li Huanhan could not control the desire to have Shizun's focus on him alone.

Jiang Yinghe made a noise of agreement and began to explain Qin Jun's origin while also performing a cleansing hand seal to clear the impurities on him. Then Li Huanhan turned to him and grasped his wrist.

Jiang Yinghe was startled. He felt an object being placed in his palm.

"There wasn't anything too good in the Tai Xu secret realm." Li Huanhan said casually, "I have tarnished it."

In his palm was a mirror stone shaped like a piece of cold jade that had been woven into a sword pendant. It was stained with fresh blood. The ancient artifact radiated a freezing aura that suited his cultivation.

Jiang Yinghe was overwhelmed once he recognized what he had received, "Why did you enter the inner layer of the secret realm? You, you seem so down to earth usually. So why do something so reckless?"

He and Li Huanhan had been master and disciple for more than 60 years, so of course there was a strong bond between them. His first reaction was simple concern. "Do not be so hasty again Huanhan....."

Before Jiang Yinghe could finish his reprimand, Zhangmen-shixiong's message talisman arrived and Zhou Zhengping's voice rang out in the residence. "Jiang-shidi, come to Zheng Hua Palace. I have a matter to discuss with you."

Jiagn Yinghe did not continue to admonish him afterwards, instead tightly clenching the stone in his hand. Glancing at Li Huanhan one last time, he said, "Your shidi has been corrupted by countless ghosts so his body is weak. I know that you are a kind person, so you should take care of him."

Only after receiving a nod from his first disciple did he step out and transform into a light headed for Zheng Hua Palace.

After Jiang Yinghe left, there were only two people remaining on Qing Jing peak.

Li Huanhan's blood-red eyes dimmed. He sat beside Qin Jun and glared at him, "Corrupted by countless spirits?"

Qin Jun licked his teeth and held his chin with one hand, showing off an arrogant smile, "Heavenly demon physique?"

The two people surprisingly had the same thought run through their minds: What a faker.

Li Huanhan extended his hand and summoned a crimson longsword. His friendly facade completely disappeared as he plunged the sword deep into the ground. He was radiating a killing intent filled with wrath from his entire body.

"You seem closer to the dead than the living, wraith. I'll expedite your journey to the afterlife."

The sword light was like a miniature sun made manifest. Qin Jun glanced at it and teased, "If I'm a wraith, then what are you? A demon that reincarnated into a human?"

With a bang, Li Huanhan's sword split through the air and pierced Qin Jun's body. The edge was positioned a hair away from his foundational core.

Yet Qin Jun did not move. He was a malicious spirit, so he could return no matter how many times his mortal form was destroyed. Even this core was just a replaceable part of his disguise.

The blood sword had opened a wound above his heart and was greedily consuming blood from the area. Li Huanhan stopped to gaze at him with suspicion, saying, "What are your intentions for approaching him?"

"I was just about to ask you the same thing." Qin Jun raised a brow, acting as if they were just discussing the weather, "What's a demon like you doing fooling around in a famously righteous sect like Peng Lai?"

The frost in Li Huanhan's gaze remained impenetrable. He pulled out his sword, leaving behind a gaping opening that healed at a visible rate.

"......Wraith." he warned with a glare, "If you dare to harm him, I will butcher you."

It has been a long time since Qin Jun had been threatened like this. He even felt a long forgotten sense of malice from Li Huanhan.

This person was probably not just a reincarnated demon. His body has the familiar scent of heavenly lightning.

Qin Jun wiggled his eyebrows and smiled mischievously. "Well that's too bad 'cause I'm going to eat him."

He watched as those blood-red eyes became even more sinister. A phrase came to mind, every treasure trove is guarded by vicious beasts.

To a ghost cultivator of his level, Jiang Yinghe was like a decadent pastry waiting for someone to bite into him and savour every last morsel.

And Li Huanhan, the vicious beast whose territory had been invaded, could no longer hold back his bloodlust.

—-

Zheng Hua Palace.

"Very few reside in the Frozen Plains, so it's an ideal place to wait out the second heavenly tribulation of the Weakened Cave stage. You've prepared many years for this, so I trust that you have thought this matter through. The path of immortality is not always straight....."

Zhou Zhengping kept prattling on. For many talented individuals, the Weakened Cave stage was already the zenith of their accomplishments in this lifetime. Only Jiang-shidi could go even further beyond.

The purpose of this meeting was precisely to discuss where to draw out his second heavenly tribulation.

It was well known in Peng Lai that Xuan Wei Xianjun's tribulation has been a long time coming. However, they also knew that it would probably proceed smoothly with how meticulous;y Jiang Yinghe was preparing ahead of time.

Jiang Yinghe, "Zhangmen-shixiong, I entrust my disciples to you while I enter seclusion."

Zhou Zhengping grew silent, which was a rare occurrence. He thought about those two youths and his heart shook with a foreboding feeling. "......They are unusual talents. I doubt they need my guidance."

Jiang Yinghe shook his head, "Although Huanhan did what was required of him on the expedition, he also showed the limitations of his maturity by entering the inner layer."

Zhou Zhengping: "With his current level of skill he should be able to hold his own there."

Jiang Yinghe sighed, "He took the ancient artifact that maintained the Tai Xu secret realm."

"Oh..." Zhou Zhengping thought that he couldn't be surprised by what that young man got up to anymore. Just after his absentminded agreement, the words 'ancient artifact' hit him. "Ah?!"

Secret realms were usually created with a precious keystone at their epicenter. People tended to leave them alone for two reasons:

"He actually got it?" Zhou Zhengping's voice rose several octaves, "That child was sent to watch over his martial siblings, why did he destroy the secret realm?!"

Jiang Yinghe coughed, somewhat embarrassed, "En...He got it."

"Li Huanhan has a fire attribute root, what was he thinking risking his life in that frozen place to get a bauble?" The location in question was not owned by Peng Lai but rather shared among many sects. Zhou Zhengping placed a hand on his chest and tried to regain control of his breathing. He felt his heart pressure rise. "Was it supposed to be a gift to his girlfriend so they could become cultivation partners?!"

Jiang Yinghe felt indignant on behalf of his disciple. How could he stand for Zhangmen-shixiong misinterpreting his respectful gesture as a frivolous fling? He said with some discontent, "Must it be for a woman?"

Zhou Zhengping's eyes widened. He stroked his beard with a trembling hand, "What, your disciple gave it to a man?!"

Jiang Yinghe: "....."

Zhou Zhengping took his silence as agreement and slapped his own leg harshly. He muttered, "This will make us the laughing stock of the cultivation world. An entire secret realm gone, and all for a man.....ain't that a real hoot."

Before he became a cultivator, Zhou Zhengping was a person from Zhong province. This was the first time in a very long while that his accent bled into his voice.

Seeing him getting further offtrack, Jiang Yinghe hurriedly interrupted, "Huanhan naturally gave it to me."

Zhou Zhengping was shocked and his blood pressure went down too. "Why didn't you say something earlier? Isn't this a classic example of piety towards elders then?"

He took a sip of tea to calm himself and continued, "Alright. It's just a case of your disciple being too overbearing without breaking any rules then. On the contrary, the other sects would probably be envious instead. In the coming days Yun Buxiu is exiting seclusion, so you can take the opportunity to go to the Thousand Miles Frozen Plains to overcome your tribulation."

Yun Buxiu, entitled Qing Yan, was one of the three Zhenrens of Peng Lai sect. He went into seclusion 200 years ago to analyze a martial technique. He is the youngest of Jiang Yinghe's generation and his shidi.

Jiang Yinghe slightly inclined his head. He was interrupted by a rumble that shook the entire Peng Lai sect. Zheng Hua Palace swayed, and their tea set fell to the floor and shattered.

Both of the elders present were stunned. They quickly went outside as streaks of light and stopped in midair to survey the origin of the impact. The

first thing they saw was an entire section of the mountain peak falling from midair only to be severed by a sword strike.

Zhou Zhengping waved his whisk and summoned a plane of green light to support half of the debris and gently lower it to the ground. There were already many disciples watching nearby having loud and vivid discussions.

He then turned to look at the stiff form of his Jiang-shidi, "Xuan Wei, I think part of your Qing Jing Peak just flew over."

Jiang Yinghe watched expressionlessly as his home collapsed. Several possibilities flew through his head until he noticed the pair standing on the broken mountain peak.

At the same time, Zhangmen-shixiong's wavering voice sounded from beside him.

"Xuan Wei, your disciples seem to be..." he thought for a minute and choked back his desire to say they were fighting to the death, "......exchanging pointers?"

Jiang Yinghe: "....."

Author's Corner

All martial brothers should be like them. Getting! Along! Like! Friends!

OceanofPDF.com

CH6 - VIVID RED ORBS (Draft)

The entire Qing Jing Peak had been eviscerated by swords. What was originally a picturesque spiritual site was now a ruin filled with debris. This was especially true for the place where the actual duel took place.

His second disciple that he only received two years ago and who had barely built his foundation had several broken bones. His foundational core was almost entirely exhausted.

Jiang Yinghe helped Qin Jun up and directed a pointed look at Li Huanhan. Just as he was about to speak, he saw that the other's sword-wielding arm began to twist as ghastly rips in the skin appeared. The unique characteristics of the heavenly demon physique became apparent. His blood dripped from his fingertips, and he resembled a malignant star given human form.

Jiang Yinghe felt his heart skip a beat. Although his cultivation did not diminish from his excursion into the depths of the secret realm, it seems that mistakes were made. Otherwise Qin Jun would not be able to injure Li Huanhan with his current level of strength.

He reconnected Qin Jun's broken bones, and the repetitive action helped soothe his original fury. He asked, "Were the two of you fighting?"

Qin Jun answered quietly, "Shixiong was just demonstrating a few moves to me."

Jiang Yinghe turned around and walked in front of Li Huanhan who was still like a statue. His thoughts were too deep to decipher.

"Pointers?" Jiang Yinghe watched as he recalled the blood sword. He then took the other's hand and pushed spiritual energy in like he always did. As

expected, he found a buildup of toxins due to his recent exertions.

His hand had long fingers and radiated a cold sheen. Li Huanhan stared at the back of his hand and remembered how Jiang Yinghe disdained the sight of blood.

Yet at this moment, Shizun's palm was touching his blood. He had lost count of the number of times he made an exception for him.

He let out a deep sigh and relaxed his voice, "Yes. I was demonstrating."

Jiang Yinghe used to be angry with them, but he did not have the heart to scold them after witnessing the aftermath. While cleansing his eldest disciple's meridians, he put on a displeased expression, "Were you two having a friendly bout or trying to level this mountain? The next time this master finds you fighting like this, you will both be sent out to repent your transgressions."

Li Huanhan's demeanour softened the longer he looked at Jiang Yinghe, until he was once again the peaceful and warm youth he remembered.

"This disciple is at fault." Li Huanhan said, "A senior should know his own strengths and limitations."

Jiang Yinghe nodded and was about to turn to discipline the other one when Li Huanhan caught his hand. The flow of energy in his body was becoming disorganized once again.

Jiang Yinghe: "!"

He hurriedly passed on more spiritual energy, but he did not notice that the soft-spoken man in front of him had an indescribable look in his eyes.

Li Huanhan stared at his lowered eyelashes, then breathed in the cold fragrance surrounding his Shizun. Jiang Yinghe's lips were slender and pale, like a freshly bloomed plum flower.

These lips were the ones that said, "Your fate is forever your own, not even heaven can take that from you," and, "You are my only disciple"

.....

In the sixty or so years since he had been reincarnated, these lips had said many similar words, words that Li Huanhan had never heard directed at him before. They slowly wormed their way into his heart and confirmed that there exists such a person in this world. He has spent the last few decades marking this person as his. Until.....

Li Huanhan looked up to meet the lazily smirking face of Qin Jun behind Jiang Yinghe. His bloodlust and wrath continued to boil in his heart.

The quiet and stoic grey-haired youth from Jiang Yinghe's memories was actually directing his burning gaze at the shapely ridges of his back. He did not back down when Li Huanhan glared at him, and even dared to sneer and lick his lips as if making fun of the demon's charade.

—-

Qing Jing Peak was repaired by Jiang Yinghe using a single talisman. However, he was somehow under the impression that the tension between his disciples was just as easily mended when in fact a cold war was raging right under his eyes.

The nights were chilly. While the sword mantle was being rebuilt, Qin Jun was going through his qi exercises under Jiang Yinghe's supervision.

The age of his body was somewhere between that of a teenager and a young adult. It appeared strong on the outside, with leanly muscled limbs and a dangerous pressure from between his brows.

But in the end this was a youth that had been tainted and consumed by countless ghosts.

While pondering that matter, he placed Wangchen on his knees to put on the sword pendant made from that piece of mirror stone. A finger glided over the many knots woven onto the string.

Just as he finished tying the accessory, he heard Qin Jun draw near.

"Shizun." His voice seemed to be falling into an endless abyss and held none of the warmth that Li Huanhan had.

Jiang Yinghe raised his head and saw that Qin Jun had finished a round of exercises and was now staring intently at the sword in his hands.

"Li.....My Shixiong," he corrected himself smoothly, "what kind of person is he?"

Jiang Yinghe thought that he had been frightened by Huanhan when he heard these words. In order for them to have a harmonious relationship in the future, he explained with great patience to Qin Jun, "Your Shixiong is very gentle."

Qin Jun was surprised, "Gentle?"

He thought back to the red eyed demonic cultivator during the day that possessed a killing intent so potent it was almost visible to the naked eye. The word 'gentle' couldn't touch him with a ten foot pole.

The word better suited Jiang Yinghe, who had a strict appearance but a soft manner of speech. It was as if he was raised in another society that was peaceful and orderly unlike the cultivation world. He made a reborn evil spirit crave him from the depths of his heart.....maybe this was what they call 'gentleness'.

Qin Jun was mesmerized by his fingertips that were idly playing with the sword pendant.

"Your Shixiong cares about his martial siblings. The recent two year expedition to the Tai Xu secret realm was led by Huanhan." Jiang Yinghe said, "As for today, he only wanted to guide you and showed restraint."

Qin Jun thought back again.....if the two of them weren't concealing their strength, he would've probably beat him to death right then and there.

Look at this devious demon go, faithfully playing his role as a good little disciple. Qin Jun licked his teeth and didn't respond.

Demonic cultivators that approached righteous ones, especially someone like Jiang Yinghe, could only have one of two intentions. One is to steal their resources before murdering them. The other is to wait until they recover their full strength and then use this Xianjun as a cultivation furnace.

From Li Huanhan's reaction, the second type seems more likely.....Qin Jun raised his head and coincidentally met Jiang Yinghe's eyes.

They were calm and clear, reflecting the stars above.

Qin Jun's eyes shook for a second, but he continued to stare wordlessly for a long time before saying, ".....What does Shizun think of Shixiong? Do you like him a lot?"

This was the delicacy he had his eyes on and he definitely wasn't the sharing type.

Jiang Yinghe glanced over at the progress bar at the top right corner of his vision. He recalled how he thought this child was desperate for a sense of security when he rescued him. He replied warmly, "Jun-er and Huanhan are the same. Shizun likes all obedient children."

The word 'obedient' was usually grating to Qin Jun's ears, but they had never been preceded by the word 'like' before.

He swallowed and came closer to hold Jiang Yinghe's hand, flipping it over and licking the cool white wrist revealed.

Jiang Yinghe knew about his body's condition, and he was used to Qin Jun being a man of action rather than words. He did not feel disgusted, but instead began to stroke his hair with his other hand, saying, "Work hard to cultivate, so you can gradually use your own strength to escape the shackles fate has placed on you."

Jiang Yinghe was not just comforting him with these words, but also himself.

After so many years of disappointment and false hopes, he could only put his all into cultivation, not knowing if his efforts would ever lead him home.

These disciples gave him hope. They reminded him of himself from so long ago.

"Humanity can triumph over the merciless heavens."

Qin Jun shook slightly, and hoarsely repeated, "Humanity can triumph over the heavens?'

Vibrant red orbs congealed before his eyes.

Jiang Yinghe nodded, he did not think anything was amiss with his reasoning, "Did you want to say that people should strive towards immortality instead? Where I was born, another school of thought was more common."

He continued, "Whether it was natural disasters or the pain brought by illnesses, why blame the heavens for toying with mortals?"

Jiang Yinghe glanced at the crisp moonlight reflected off the walls.

"Three thousand years ago, the Spirit Patriarch was defeated by heavenly lightning summoned by the righteous faction. The legends say they despised him solely due to the fact that he was born an evil spirit. But no one has control over where they start in life. The same goes for you, Jun-er, you cannot....."

Before he finished speaking, the Qin Jun who was originally contently licking blood froze. He looked up, "But he still fell in the end."

Jiang Yinghe thought he had a grudge in his heart against ghost cultivators, "There are few who can ascend to begin with. If you are able to climb that far, there is no shame in falling."

The candles were burning leisurely. The moonlight passed through the courtyard and illuminated the entrance.

Qin Jun did not speak. Jiang Yinghe was used to these long silences from him. He stood up and placed Wangchen back onto its sword mantle. Not far away, a pair of steel-gray eyes stared at the outline of his back.

Qing Jun suddenly felt that sword pendant was very unsightly.

The tea set, chess pieces, even the bedding and the meditation platform. They were all a testament to the deep sentiments between Li Huanhan and Jiang Yinghe, trophies that the demon set out over time.

Qin Jun could barely restrain his urge to destroy it all.

Author's Corner

Jiang Yinghe: Add a spoonful of repeated admonishment, add a spoonful of chicken soup for the soul, then add a bucket of respect for the teacher and the Dao....the recipe for a righteous successor!

Righteous Faction:.....Please stop, I'm scared.

I was not expecting this part to suddenly become so melancholic. Jiang Yinghe over here dishing out his modern PoV.

OceanofPDF.com

CH7 - SHIXIONG'S STRANGE DISCIPLES (Draft)

The main palace of Peng Lai sect.

Enveloped in green and holding a pure white whisk, Zhou Zhengping said to the person beside him, "Yun-shidi sent word that he would return today, which coincides with your departure. You can go into seclusion without worrying....."

Jiang Yinghe, "He arrives today?"

Zhou Zhengping knew what he was thinking about and comforted him, "The only reason Xiao Yun-shidi confessed to you before was due to being cursed by a demonic cultivator. Rest assured, now that he has reached the Primordial God stage, he should not be affected by such a thing anymore."

Jiang Yinghe had forgotten about that incident several centuries ago, but now that he was reminded of it by Zhangmen-shixiong he felt a chill run down his spine. Before he could reply, he sensed a wave of light heading towards them.

The bright white light seemed to shift and dove into Jiang Yinghe's embrace.

"Shixiong! I'm back, I'm back! I came as soon as I could to see you!"

Jiang Yinghe expressionlessly peeled his little shidi off and held him at arms-length by the collar of his shirt. He lightly inquired, "Is your foundation stable?"

"Yep yep, no problems here! Shixiong, I've missed you~"

This person was still the same as he was before his centuries of seclusion. He took full advantage of his status as Jiang Yinghe's shidi, nuzzling into the crevice of his neck, "Shixiong, you smell so nice ah..."

Zhou Zhengping was unable to look on at such a shameless sight. He coughed and was just about to reprimand him until he caught the rapidly cooling expression of Jiang Yinghe.

He quickly said, "Have....."

Boom!

The white figure that was just cuddling with Jiang-shidi was thrown out of the room in a graceful and powerful arc, crashing headfirst into the outer palace courtyard. Only a deep crater several meters deep was left after the dust cleared.

Zhou Zhengping, "......Have mercy."

Jiang Yinghe remained unaffected with not even a single hair out of place. "Zhangmen-shixiong." he said.

Zhou Zhengping replied with a weary face, "That was quite the technique. It's fine if Xiao Yun-shidi breaks a few bones, but don't go so far as to harm the cultivation progress he just made during seclusion."

Jiang Yinghe took a sip of tea, "He's pretending."

"Huh? Pretending?"

Jiang Yinghe did not reply. He directed his gaze to the floor in front of him and returned his cup to the table.

A clear sound from the cup's base emanated throughout the room.

At the same time, the floor of the palace hall suddenly burst open and a white streak accompanied by a sword light charged out. Dazzling rays illuminated the room before condensing onto a single point that cut towards the occupants.

In the blink of an eye, the screech of ice meeting metal was heard. The sharp and serrated edge was deftly deflected by a snow-white sword. Before the sound dispersed, Yun Buxiu had been knocked several meters away by Wangchen, half-kneeling in front of its master.

His appearance remained unruffled. Cupping his hands, he saluted, "Thanking Shixiong for his guidance."

The ripples on the surface of the teacup beside Jiang Yinghe stilled. All was silent.

Wangchen appeared for only an instant before being withdrawn by Jiang Yinghe. But Yun Buxiu caught sight of the spiritually pure mirror stone attached to its hilt.

"A sword pendant?" Yun Buxiu asked as he got up and approached, "Did Shixiong find a cultivation partner?"

Zhou Zhengping was not a sword cultivator, so he had no idea what 'guidance' was actually imparted in that exchange. He explained, "That was a present from one of Jiang-shidi's disciples to commemorate their master-disciple relationship. Much more significant than just a gift from a partner, wouldn't you say?"

Yun Buxiu nodded, then jolted to a stop, "Did you just say disciple?"

Jiang Yinghe, "I am counting on you to look after them on my behalf during my seclusion in the Frozen Plains."

Yun Buxiu took a seat next to them and casually agreed, "Sure, I'll babysit your kids for you."

Jiang Yinghe thought about his disciples. They both came from troubled backgrounds, but they were also hardworking and good children. He inclined his head in thanks.

Zhou Zhengping, "......Kids that can cut mountains when arguing."

Yun Buxiu froze, "Cut what?"

Just as Jiang Yinghe wanted to say something in their defense, he heard Zhangmen-shixiong continue glumly from beside him, "If you go they'll cut you too."

Yun Buxiu, "....."

—-

No one noticed Jiang Yinghe's departure from Peng Lai except for Li Huanhan.

He could sense the mirror stone was getting further away.

When Li Huanhan opened his eyes, it was raining outside. The scent he had left on the pendant was becoming faint.

Qing Jing Peak contained many residences. Jiang Yinghe resided in the White Crane Jade Manor, named after the crane spirit beasts living there. Li Huanhan and Qin Jun also had their own rooms.

Li Huanhan sat on his bed and laid down a sound array. Then he stared at his palm. A thick stream of demonic energy exited the area and condensed into a thin red gash. The flesh of his palm then split open to reveal a bloodshot eyeball that spun around erratically.

When the eyes saw him, it let out a high-pitched scream, "AH!! Let me go! Let me go! Xuehe Demon Lord! Why am I still here...Why aren't you dead?!"

Li Huanhan's expression was cold. He had no reaction to the hysterical screeching of the creature. "Find a person for this lord."

The bloody eye quieted down and spun several more times, eventually saying in a coy voice, "Who does master want to find? This blood shadow will require a new body to do so....."

It suddenly stopped speaking and began blinking out of fear as Li Huanhan's other hand approached, intending to gouge it out.

"Ahhhhh! Xuehe! You can't do this! Nonono! I'm a part of you! I was originally a part of you! Ahhhhh Li Huanhan!"

Just as Li Huanhan's finger pierced the eyeball, it let out a blood-curdling scream, "I don't need anything! I'll do it for free! Who in the world are you trying to find?!"

"Xuan Wei Xianjun," Li Huanhan said calmly, "Jiang Yinghe."

The eye gave him a plaintive glance before closing. After some time, it reopened and said, "He's in the far north region. His destination seems to be...the Frozen Plains?"

"The Frozen Plains....." Li Huanhan's gaze shifted as he pondered this new information. Then he began withdrawing his demonic energy.

"Quickly go back to the Blood Pond! Quickly!" The blood shadow continued, "That Xianjun or whatever is perfectly suited to become a furnace to further your cultivation! His constitution is pure, so Junshang will definitely be able to ascend this time....."

Without fuel to sustain itself, the eyeball disappeared from Li Huanhan's palm with a shriek.

He turned and dispelled the sound array. Glancing at one of the neighbouring rooftops, he sneered, "Still planning to hide there?"

A previously flat section of the roof opened up and the gray-haired Qin Jun emerged. His silver sword, Zhanyun, was on his lap. Leaning his head on his hand, he said, "Eyeballs can grow from your hand. Wow. Let me think...what did it just call you?"

Li Huanhan gave him a warning glance. His palm tingled. For the first time, he smiled at someone other than Jiang Yinghe, but it was a chilling sight.

"Qin Jun," he said, "I think it would be best if you left the sect soon."

Qin Jun's eyes narrowed with mirth, "I was just about to say the same to you."

Li Huanhan reached out to grasp his red longsword. A potent killing aura emanated from his body. The target of his bloodlust, however, offhandedly cracked his knuckles in response.

The wraith licked his lips, baring his long-hidden incisors in a grotesque grin.

—-

Jiang Yinghe left Peng Lai the first day Yun Buxiu got back. That same day, he came to Qing Jing Peak to 'babysit the kids'.

The spirit cranes outside the main manor were all dozing in the light rain. The atmosphere here was wonderfully calm, and it was impossible to tell that this area had once been reduced to a barren wasteland.

Yun Buxiu stood at the summit and took a deep breath while surveying Peng Lai. He was very pleased. Just as he was about to take a good look at Jiang-shixiong's disciples, the ground beneath his feet began to tremble.

Yun Buxiu: "......?"

A blood-coloured light flashed by, and Qing Jing's mountain top was once again severed.

Yun Buxiu: !!!

Xiao Yun-shidi was caught in the resulting rockslide, and he barely managed to escape by turning into his light form in midair. After landing in a nearby valley, he looked up to see a youth surrounded by miasma deflect the sword light that had torn through where he stood using his own longsword. An ominous laugh escaped his lips.

"Haven't you disciplined me enough, Shi~Xiong~?"

The word shixiong was enunciated deliberately and slowly. It was obviously meant as a provocation and was dripping in hubris.

"Discipline?" The other person was dark from head to toe with a cruel and violent air about him. His gleaming red sword seemed to have rivulets of fluid surrounding it. "You are not worthy of being disciplined by me."

One side was deadly sinister and the other was overwhelmingly demonic. The rest of Peng Lai should have been alarmed by all the ruckus they've caused, but some array nearby must have prevented detection except at point-blank range.

He blankly stared at the scene before him, absentmindedly brushed off nonexistent dust from his sleeves. He had not yet recovered from his shock when the man in black turned to pin him with those eyes that seemed to swirl like a whirlpool of blood.

The atmosphere became strange.

"What should we do?" Qin Jun suddenly asked.

Li Huanhan looked away, "Kill him."

Qin Jun rubbed his chin with a considering look, "But how would you explain it to Shizun when he gets back? Let's just erase his memories."

Li Huanhan narrowed his eyes in disgust, "Then you do it."

Yun Buxiu: "....."

What kind of disciples has my Shixiong been collecting?!!

Author's Corner

Yun Buxiu: It's too dangerous here, let me go back into seclusion...

Poor Yun Buxiu didn't sign up for this.

OceanofPDF.com

CH8 - THE BEST PERSON IN SHIZUN'S HEART (Draft)

Ice formed a seal over the Frozen Plains.

There was only white as far as the eye could see. In a hidden crevice, a fox devil poked her pair of white ears out. Only after looking around cautiously did she dart away.

The closer she got, the more intense the scent of immortal cultivation became. She swallowed back her saliva and turned to see that, as expected, an arctic wolf was near the practitioner's quarters.

"Hmph, he can't even give me a heads up when he leaves, some friend he is." muttered the fox devil quietly. She found a secluded place above the cave and began to meditate.

As more time passed by, more and more devils came here. In the last century, they gradually came to understand Jiang Yinghe's temperament and learned that he did not mind them borrowing the spiritual energy he radiated to cultivate. The only time he chased two little devils away was when their incorporeal forms entangled to fight for a spot that was closer to him.

And in these one hundred years, many devils who obtained a human form thanks to the cultivator left their most prized trinkets in front of the cave out of gratitude before setting off. That person never made a move to retrieve any of it, so a small mountain of treasure had formed.

There was a ripple of energy through the air. A butterfly made of ice flew next to the fox devil and spoke in a familiar voice.

"You've siphoned energy for several decades already, Xue Qianqian, so why are your ears still out?"

Xue Qianqian rolled her eyes, "I'm dumb and not smart like you, happy?"

The ice butterfly laughed and looked in the direction of the cave before turning back to Xue Qianqian. "I've heard an interesting rumour, little fox, are you interested?"

Xue Qianqian knew that she was the type of person that couldn't go to sleep at night without gossiping a bit first, so of course she said, "Just tell me or go, you're delaying my cultivation."

The butterfly got closer to her ear and whispered consiparatively, "I heard my clan elders say that an archdevil will reawaken here soon."

"An archdevil?" Xue Qianqian jeered, "That's the same load of crap I hear every year. Is it so easy to revive them? Right now the devil race is weak, we only have the Devil Barons Jiuying and Hundun to hold down the fort. An archdevil is an existence above even them that only appears once every few thousand years. Stop daydreaming already."

Offended by her skepticism, the butterfly pulled at her sleeve and hissed, "I'm being serious right now!"

Xue Qianqian shook off her hand and adjusted her posture, "Are you living in the past? Ever since the Devil God and Devil King Tianhou fell one after the other....."

Before she finished talking, the normally calm waves of energy emanating from the cave stopped. Dark clouds began to gather above the alcove, with purple lighting brewing inside. A terrifying pressure descended from above.

Just as the assembled little devils began to panic, a warm gust of wind cascaded out of the cave and blew everyone several kilometers away.

Xue Qianqian and the ice butterfly tumbled several times before coming to a stop. Before they had even regained their bearings, an earth-shattering

lightning bolt struck the cave. Bits of debris flew through the air accompanied by a blinding flash of light.

If it wasn't for the cultivator's burst of energy just now, all of the devils present would have been vaporized.

Xue Qianqian felt the blood drain from her face, she held her thumping chest. The butterfly beside her stammered several times before getting out, "So this...this purple lightning means...there's a Xianjun at the Hollowed Cave stage inside!"

Hollowed Cave stage, huh..... Xue Qianqian swallowed with some difficulty, "Xian, Xianjun? Is it his first or second tribulation?"

Those at the Hollowed Cave stage need to endure three lightning tribulations and five tests of their dedication to the Dao before they could be referred to as a half-step from a bonafide Golden Immortal. In the entire cultivation world, there were only two Xianjuns at present. One was Xuan Wei Xianjun Jiang Yinghe from Peng Lai sect and the other was Hun Yuan Xianjun Tong Guiyu from He Huan sect.

Only someone who was ice and snow incarnate like Jiang Yinghe would choose to receive their tribulation in a place like this.

Not just these two, all the devils of the Frozen Plains were reflecting on this near brush with death. Everyone's eyes were glued to the ongoing tribulation. This was a rare chance to improve their cultivation drastically!

"It is said that Jiang Xianjun has a cool temperament, but I think that's just a front to hide his warm nature. Where else would you find someone that would remember the likes of us at a time like this?" The butterfly sighed, "Why don't you try to ask him to take you as a disciple? Then you would be set for life."

Xue Qianqian huffed, "Are you trying to get me killed?"

Their banter slowly died down. The rolling clouds occasionally revealed the purple sky above. The sheer quantity of charge that was present was deeply

disorienting. Yet no one was able to look away.

The sounds of the lightning tribulation lasted about half a day and left the devils with a migraine. When they were almost at their limit, the layers of clouds began to drift away. The scent of spiritual energy in the air became richer until it made some of them dizzy with desire.

Just as the devils nearby were about to faint, a man's cold and distant voice could be heard from within.

"Do not approach."

Just three words from Xuan Wei Xianjun stopped the more courageous devils in their tracks. They all kneeled and paid their respects as if to a teacher in the direction of the ice-encrusted cave.

"Those who have not been taught by me need not kneel this way." Jiang Yinghe said lightly, "Leave this place."

The voice was clear and melodious. Xue Qianqian felt her body move away despite her wanting to stay just a while longer.

All the devils soon scattered.

—-

Jiang Yinghe was clothed in light green with bamboo leaves woven on his coat. His foundation was still unstable after his recent tribulation, but he was in no rush to repair it. Instead, he lifted his head to look deeper into the cave at the youth encased in ice.

A hundred years ago, he stumbled upon this frozen shell while looking for a place to invoke his tribulation. By analyzing the words carved nearby, Jiang Yinghe concluded that this was the one of the residences of a fallen ancient archdevil.

Yet there was no trace of devilish aura on the structure. The body within was well-preserved, as if it was intended to be eaten later or kept as a 'pet' by the owner who for whatever reason did not return.

There were many ways for devils to quickly raise their cultivation levels. Only those who choose to borrow the methods of humans got stronger at a more gradual pace.

Jiang Yinghe stood up and approached the sculpture. He glanced over the youth's face.

His hair was dark and his skin was fair. Faintly red lips highlighted his exquisite appearance. If it wasn't for the shape of his Adam's apple, he could almost be mistaken for a girl. It's just that the left side of his face was horrifically disfigured, as if a devil had gnawed on it.

The contrast was devastatingly cruel to behold.

When Jiang Yinghe's hand touched the ice, it shattered and the body within fell into his embrace.

It was too cold.

Due to the nature of his cultivation, his body temperature was already cooler than most. But the youth he was holding was like a block of ice.

A block of ice that could move. Like he was waking up from a deep sleep, the youth hugged his neck and whispered pitifully, "Cold....."

Even his voice was shivering.

Jiang Yinghe took out a black coat from his personal dimension and draped it over the other's shoulders. He then lifted the youth into his arms. While the boy warmed up, a notification suddenly appeared from the system that had been silent for a century.

[Target located! Assessment result is: A stunning masterpiece.]

Jiang Yinghe paused. He felt like a compulsion to collect them all had been satisfied for some strange reason. The road to immortality was ever changing, so maybe it was easier to raise three outstanding disciples after all?

He reached out a hand to examine the other's meridians. He had nothing left to say after finding the shattered fragments of frozen spiritual veins. Just as he was questioning his life, the youth in his arms raised his head to reveal a half beautiful face.

Eyes as clear as water looked up, accompanied by a voice weak from disuse.

"Please help me.....I'm, I'm so cold....."

Jiang Yinghe felt like he had been hit. An uncontrollable current of paternal love welled up from his heart. Although he was only in his twenties when he left Earth, he had been alive for almost twelve hundred years in total. He sent spiritual energy into the youth's body, bypassing the frozen veins to his forehead, where he created a silvery seal of protection.

He rested his chin on the top of the youth's head, saying in a soft tone, "Don't worry, I'll help you."

The boy covered by a black cloak tightened his hold on Jiang Yinghe and breathed in deeply.

The slightly cold air filled with spiritual energy rushed into his lungs and broke past the fog of his recently revived mind.

—-

The child in the cave was called Chang Ye.

Jiang Yinghe did not head back immediately to Peng Lai using his light form. After he took Chang Ye away from the Frozen Plains, the duo spent several months walking to the sect.

Chang Ye was a lively child, but he knew when to be obedient. His only fault was his clinginess. According to him, he was sold to slavers after getting lost from his refugee family. Then a devil captured him and imprisoned him in the Frozen Plains.

He said that he owes Jiang Yinghe one life debt for saving him and another for becoming his teacher.

The candlelight wavered.

Jiang Yinghe was sitting cross legged on the cushion polishing Wangchen. The snow white sword pendant swung under his ministrations.

The door sounded, and Chang Ye who was wearing dark green brought over a small plate of sweets.

Jiang Yinghe looked up to carefully examine Chang Ye, ignoring the sweets. He said, "You were walking faster and your demeanour is troubled. What is on your mind?"

Chang Ye did not think that he would notice. He raised his head in panic and said in a slightly awkward way, "......Shizun. I, am I really ugly?"

Jiang Yinghe was stunned.

"I just bumped into a young lady. She said that...that my face was like a jigsaw puzzle. She told me to leave before her eyes were stained by the sight of me."

Chang Ye's voice became more and more quiet. He carefully wiped his tears.

"Shizun, I know that cultivators should learn to look...look at what is within. But I....."

His hand was held by another.

Jiang Yinghe's fingers were slender and soft, with the sheen of frost. Yet the spot where they touched Chang Ye's palm radiated warmth.

"The ugliness of her heart is the only thing that will stain others." Jiang Yinghe looked at him, "Promise Shizun you will remain pure. Chang Ye should forever be a kind and agreeable person."

Chang Ye paused. He swallowed, then dove into Jiang Yinghe's embrace.

It was quite a while before Jiang Yinghe heard the other say quietly.

"I will be the best person in Shizun's heart."

Author's Corner

Jiang Yinghe: Add a spoonful of kind teachings, a spoonful of good nature, then add a bucket of respect for the teacher and the Dao...

Devil Race: For some reason we're kinda scared too QAQ

Well Chang Ye seems like a cute little bun. I wonder how long that'll last.

OceanofPDF.com

CH9 - A HARMONIOUS PAIR (Draft)

The next time Jiang Yinghe saw Chang Ye, he was wearing an ornate black mask that covered half of his face. The portion that remained visible was breathtaking to behold, like a vivid peony blossom.

The black-haired youth carefully packed their belongings and was now waiting obediently for his Shizun beside the front desk. He had not expressed even a single complaint or question about the months of travelling on foot.

Jiang Yinghe was touched, this little disciple of his was such a sweet and clever boy.

He noticed that the third progress bar on the system's display had finally unlocked. His mood improved as he thought about how he was one step closer to returning home. He reached out to a hand to Chang Ye.

Chang Ye turned his head and called out, "Shizun." he then stared at the snow white hand that was holding his.

The sun was just beginning to climb into the sky, so a multitude of rainbow-coloured rays shone down on the two. There was a faint fragrance in the air. Chang Ye was like a young pup who had just woken up, imprinting the other's scent deeply into his mind.

They arrived in the southern province where Peng Lai resided four months later.

Crossing the boundary into sect territory, a green-clothed youth jumped down from his rocky perch once he caught sight of Jiang Yinghe. He hurried to greet the elder, "Congratulations on the Xianjun's successful return from seclusion. Sect Master Zhou anticipated your arrival and sent this disciple to attend to you. This one is.....?"

Chang Ye seemed to be sixteen or seventeen at most, but he was unusually tall. It was often hard to discern a cultivator's true age based only on appearance.

"He is this master's newest disciple." Jiang Yinghe introduced concisely. He placed a comforting hand on Chang Ye's shoulder and guided him through the defensive formations surrounding the sect.

After emerging from the concealment arrays, the scenery before them suddenly changed. Chang Ye tightened his grip on Jiang Yinghe's hand before gradually relaxing.

Jiang Yinghe wanted him to become more comfortable in this new environment, so they took a more scenic route back to Qing Jing Peak. All the disciples along the way greeted him respectfully. The news that Xuan Wei Xianjun exited seclusion with a little disciple in tow soon spread across Peng Lai.

Qing Jing Peak had not changed much from when he had left. The spiritual cranes were idly resting by the entrance. Jiang Yinghe sensed someone's presence when he opened the main doors to his residence. He looked up to see Xiao Yun-shidi seated beside the sword mantle with a long face.

Xiao Yun-shidi had changed a lot in the past century. There were even some silver strands in his once inky-black hair, as if he had exhausted himself with worry recently.

Jiang Yinghe raised his eybrows, "Shidi, you....."

Yun Buxiu only realized he had an audience when he heard his voice. He paused, then rushed over, "Shixiong ahhhhhh!!! My life is so hard–"

Jiang Yinghe did not react. He caught the other person and held him up by his shirt collar. "What happened?"

Xiao Yun-shidi became more depressed by the ease with which he was caught. He let out a long breath, "Shixiong, Li Huanhan and Qin Jun have both broken through to the Nascent Soul stage."

Even Jiang Yinghe was surprised by this. He scrunched his brows, "How fast."

Before he entered seclusion, he left a bottle of blood for Jun-er. Who would have thought that by the time he returned he would have made this much progress.

"Not only that." Yun Buxiu said, aggrieved, "The two of them insist on leaving Peng Lai to go on excursions all the time. Your first disciple is obsessed with training and only comes back to dump his loot in the Qing Jing treasury! The second disciple is on a demon killing spree and recently hunted down an evil sea dragon to get its pearl to use as a light for your room! I feel more and more like my status as their shishu has been dragged through the mud and marginalized...Hey, who's this?"

Yun Buxiu stared at the half-masked Chang Ye, then at his unreadable and aloof shixiong. He choked out, "Could this be...your....."

"My little disciple." Jiang Yinghe let go of him to stroke Chang Ye's head.

Yun Buxiu dusted himself out of habit while looking at this so-called 'little disciple'. He suddenly had a very bad premonition.

"...Shixiong."

Jiang Yinghe: "?"

"If I'm not mistaken, Li Huanhan should be back soon."

While Jiang Yinghe was processing his words, his Xiao Yun-shidi had already escaped in the flash of an eye by turning into a stream of light. What made him run away like the hounds of hell were on his heels?"

Li Huanhan was a warm person that cared greatly for his fellow sect members. He was also an attentive instructor to his shidi, which is a good thing for Chang Ye.

Just as Jiang Yinghe was lost in his thoughts, Chang Ye who stood a few steps away felt a deadly killing intent directed at him, intense enough to send a shiver down his spine.

Chang Ye turned to look at the entrance. At the same time, a blood-red longsword emitting a horrifying aura flew through the doors and embedded itself deeply into the ground before him. It could almost be mistaken for a demonic instrument.

But Chang Ye could sense that this sword had already been disguised and definitely did not look like this to Jiang Yinghe's eyes. Otherwise that person would never have allowed such an object to appear on Qing Jing Peak.

He raised his head to see a red eyed man in dark clothing appear before him. His eyes only had room for his Shizun.

Only during pauses in his conversation with Jiang Yinghe did this bloody demon glare at him with a gaze filled with bloodlust, wrath and endless envy.

Like a river of magma underneath a layer of ice.

Chang Ye felt his throat tighten. The reincarnated soul in his vessel slowly opened its eyes to reveal the ancient beast within.

He smiled thinly at the demon hiding his true nature before him.

—-

It rained the night Jiang Yinghe returned.

Huanhan remained unchanged after a hundred years. He offered to show Chang Ye to his room like the good shixiong he was. Now that Chang Ye

had been accepted into the sect, it would be good for him to become more independent to focus on cultivation.

The rhythmic pitter-patter of the rain brought about a sense of drowsiness. Jiang Yinghe took out the novels he had collected over the years from his personal dimension and began to reread them.

He had nothing else to do. There were no smartphones, computers or internet here, so life was much more simple.

Jiang Yinghe only glanced at a few words before noticing a new book resting on the jade table. He examined it out of curiosity. It must have been left here by Yun Buxiu. He casually read out the title.

'My Days in the Cultivation World being Pampered by Three Powerful Lovers'.

.....The style looked familiar.

Somewhat dazed, Jiang Yinghe flipped to the first page. The system that had been hibernating suddenly exclaimed with audible excitement in its computer-generated voice, "Yes! Just my cup of tea!"

Jiang Yinghe coughed, "You guys like these kinds of books?"

System: ".....Then what do you want to read about? Distance learning? How to become a good shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe thought about it for a moment and nodded, "If it can be of use to me, I don't mind taking a look."

He continued to flip through the book. It seemed like a dramatic love story. Who knew that Yun Buxiu's tastes were like those of a schoolgirl from Earth? Is this how they did things in the cultivation world?

Jiang Yinghe paused on the last page.

Blue lines lined the page, and gold ink announced in flowing strokes: 'Hundred Year Ranking of Notable Cultivators'.

This page was folded and began from the bottom. Jiang Yinghe trusted his intuition and went straight for the innermost section after glancing at a few names.

To break through to the Nascent Soul stage in such a short time, this kind of rare genius was definitely included in this list, and quite near the top. Maybe even in the first three spots.

Jiang Yinghe opened the paper up completely with anticipation. His disciples were both here, with Li Huanhan at number 2 and Qin Jun at number 5. Their names were outlined in red.

Jiang Yinghe was surprised by this, he saw that the short description beside Li Huanhan's name read: 'Under the tutelage of Xuan Wei Xianjun, he is a fully fledged Nascent Soul cultivator. A rare genius that has a disregard for the living and is completely devoid of kindness. He has no fate with the Dao due to his heavenly demon physique, and so his ranking was purposely lowered.'

Jiang Yinghe felt his heart go cold at the last sentence. His eyes traced over the first part again before moving on to Qin Jun's entry.

The description beside his name read: 'Under the tutelage of Xuan Wei Xianjun, he is an early stage Nascent Soul cultivator. A rare genius who is arrogant and easily resorts to extreme violence. His body is weakened by miasma and he is not expected to live past the middle levels. He has no fate with the Dao, and so his ranking was purposely lowered.'

Jiang Yinghe's good mood was gone. He closed the book and deeply sighed, "....How can people that talented and hard-working have no fate with the Dao?"

He heard soft footsteps approaching through the rain and looked out the window.

The youth took off his wet cloak and quickly climbed under his Shizun's blanket, just like he used to do on every chilly night when they were returning to Peng Lai.

"Chang Ye," Jiang Yinghe said with exasperation, "you can't sleep with Shizun anymore."

The ball wrapped in the blanket wriggled a bit before a head popped up from between Jiang Yinghe's arms. The teen's eyes were black and shiny, appearing pitiful and pleading.

"Shizun, I'm still kind of nervous." Chang Ye blinked, "And Li-shixiong is so scary."

Jiang Yinghe stroked his hair and thought of the prejudice many held against those with the heavenly demon physique. He sighed, "Huanhan is actually very nice. Don't be too concerned with appearances."

After hearing this from Jiang Yinghe, Chang Ye had a new suspicion about that demon's scheme: was he planning to deceive Shizun into becoming his cultivation partner in order to use him as a furnace?

His thoughts coincided exactly with Qin Jun's. They could only think the worst of each other.

Chang Ye shifted to reveal the wounds caused by a sword on his forearms. He said in a wronged tone, "Shizun, Li-shixiong hits too hard. Can you blow on it for me....."

His eyes were open and clear, like they were from a spring of innocence.

Author's Corner

Don't ask. They all think that they're the kindest one and the others are scheming bastards.

OceanofPDF.com

CH10 - CONSCIENTIOUS SECT SIBLINGS (Draft)

Chang Ye was a classic example of a pure child. His eyes contained only an innocent love, very different from both Li Huanhan and Qin Jun.

Kids that could cry and be mischievous naturally received more attention. Jiang Yinghe felt paternal love well up from his heart when he looked into the youth's beautiful and moist eyes. He examined the wounds on Chang Ye's hand and softened his voice, "Considering your recent arrival, your Shixiong has been overly strict with you."

Chang Ye nuzzled into his lap pitifully, "I don't think Li-shixiong likes me a lot."

"How can that be?" replied Jiang Yinghe, who at this point had permanent rose-coloured glasses on when it came to his disciples, "He doesn't instruct any other sect siblings so he is more attentive to you."

His slightly cool fingertip stopped at the edge of the cut. A chilly stream of spiritual energy emerged with a hand sign and covered the area, numbing it.

Chang Ye peered at him out of the corner of his eyes while thinking about Li Huanhan's bloodthirsty gaze. The half of his lips that were covered by the mask twitched.

Attentive? That lunatic was possessive to a psychotic degree. If he had really just been a talented youth, that 'kind and attentive' Li-shixiong would have probably already scattered his ashes off the mountain.

Even if this grated on him, he swallowed back the blood that threatened to come up his throat and focused on the eyebrows of Jiang Yinghe.

He had slept for too long. Jiang Yinghe was the first person he saw after he woke up.

The cold spiritual energy gradually closed the sword wound. The wavering candlelight seemed to illuminate a kinder side of his Shizun.

Chang Ye moved closer.

Jiang Yinghe only noticed when he finished healing the cut on his hand. His little disciple was warm and his gaze was like a crystal clear pond.

"Shizun," his voice was soft like cotton, "can I sleep with you tonight? It's raining."

"What about the rain?" Jiang Yinghe asked.

Change Ye hesitated a bit. "I-It was raining when that devil kidnapped me to the Frozen Plains. I'm a bit, a bit....."

His features were too perfect and gave off an androgynous feeling. Even wearing a half mask, he was a beauty worth launching a hundred ships for. He was even more charming now with his eyes filled with tears. Jiang Yinghe was touched and pitied this child even more.

He stopped Chang Ye from continuing and rubbed his soft black hair. "Don't be afraid, Shizun is here."

Jiang Yinghe was actually not very good at comforting others, but his words seemed to hit the spot this time.

Chang Ye nodded at him before diving into Shizun's fragrant embrace. This recently awakened archdevil was thinking about how to protect the overly kind cultivator before him even though he had not recovered yet.

He could not let someone who treated the devils of the Frozen Plains with respect be ruined by that red-eyed demon.....Count it as his gratitude for

unlocking his icy prison.

He found a suitable excuse to explain away the blossoming feelings of warmth and love in his chest.

The rain continued to fall as he entered a restful slumber.

Countless years later, he would look back on these lies and feel his heart beat a fraction of how fast it had pounded then.

—-

The headway he had been making with the 'A Jiang Shizun System' has stalled.

Jiang Yinghe wiped down Wangchen with a dissatisfied air as he glanced at the stagnant progress bars.

Chang Ye was improving by leaps and bounds each day and Huanhan was a half-step from the Primordial God stage. Although Jun-er was out right now on an excursion, he shouldn't be far behind according to his original pace.

Jiang Yinghe cast a suspicious glance at the display in the top-right corner of his vision. He was beginning to think that it wasn't just measuring cultivation progress but probably other variables as well.

A loud crash from outside Qing Jing Peak interrupted his musings. Even the dozing crane spirits were startled and quiet voiced their discontent from the yard.

Then the main doors opened violently as a giant brute of a beast blocked the entrance. It roared several times in pain. The devilish aura rolling off him could almost run a person over.

Jiang Yinghe noticed the silver longsword embedded in its hide.

Isn't that.....Jun-er's sword?

The sheer volume of the devil beast was loud enough to disturb the entire sect.

Before Jiang Yinghe could say something, the beast deflated like a balloon that had been cut, gradually morphing into a man that collapsed onto the ground, revealing the person behind him. They pulled out Zhanyun from its back.

Qin Jun returned his sword to its scabbard and saluted Jiang Yinghe. The lines of his face were sharp and those steel-gray eyes gave people the feeling that he could even cut down his martial siblings without even blinking.

"Shizun," he had rushed back after hearing that Jiang Yinghe had exited seclusion. He seemed quite pleased right now. "this overgrown animal ambushed this disciple on his way back, which is why I've brought him here. I'll rip out his core to feed to the cranes later."

Jiang Yinghe was made speechless by those words. He glanced at the figure writhing around in pain and said, "A devil at the Primordial God stage. Is he a follower of Devil Baron Jiuying?"

Qin Jun replied, "It's just an overgrown animal. I heard that Shizun took in a new disciple from the Frozen Plains where devils congregate. Let Shixiong take a look....."

He placed a hand on the hilt of his sword and turned to look at Change Ye, who was attracted by the devil beast's screams. This little half masked shidi of his was trembling behind a tree, apparently frightened by him.

"Your shidi's facial injury was due to a devil, and his spiritual veins have been frozen and shattered. It will be difficult for him to cultivate." Jiang Yinghe said, "Jun-er, don't scare him."

Qin Jun nodded. The devil at his feet froze when he saw Chang Ye. Then an inhuman shriek came from his throat, as if he wanted to say something. He finally spat out a mouthful of blood and smashed his head on the ground to render himself unconscious out of fear.

Qin Jun smiled meaningfully, "If that's the case, then Shidi must really hate these evil abominations, right?"

Chang Ye rolled the words 'evil abominations' over his tongue. He glanced at the devil on the ground, "Devils that peacefully cultivate and those that use evil practises are like oil and water, they don't mix. Demons and undead on the other hand are the natural enemies of all living things. Right, Shixiong?"

Qin Jun glared at him before looking at Jiang Yinghe only to find that his Shizun had drawn close to the beast.

Jiang Yinghe calmly stated, "According to the terms of the treaty signed long ago with Devil King Jiuying, your attack on this master's disciple forfeits your right to its protections. Your punishment will be decided by us."

The beast shifted its posture so that it could look at this immortal cultivator. The wounds inflicted by Zhanyun were still bleeding.

The mask-wearing youth gave off a terrifying scent unique to devils of pure lineage. The last embers of his will to fight were stamped out when he saw him. The same went for that Qin Jun who was far stronger than he should've been for a Nascent Soul cultivator.

Jiang Yinghe sighed and said to Qin Jun, "It is true that the devil race cannot be lumped into a single group. You should also stay your sword to prevent your future tribulations from becoming troublesome."

Qin Jun had never been concerned with the difficulty of heavenly tribulations. After all, he was already the type of existence most hated by the Dao, so a few more lives were nothing to him. But when Jiang Yinghe admonished him out of worry, it made his heart that had been still for many years beat violently in his chest.

That rich fragrance that emanated from his soul was so delicious.....Qin Jun moved closer and was about to touch Jiang Yinghe's sleeve when his shidi

who was just 'a little scared' suddenly became 'very scared' and jumped into Shizun's arms.

Qin Jun's arm froze in midair. He suddenly understood Li Huanhan's feelings towards their 'pure' and 'delicate' shidi.

"Why don't Shixiong and I teach him together?"

Author's Corner

Qin Jun: Don't be scared, none of us are good people.

Oh the author also clarified the cultivation stages in the world. It goes:

Foundation Building – Divine Spirit – Golden Core – Nascent Soul – Primordial God – Weakened Cave – Ascension

OceanofPDF.com

CH11 - A LONE EXCEPTION (Draft)

At first glance it seemed like a well-intentioned offer.

Chang Ye remembered this slight in his heart. He grasped Jiang Yinghe's sleeve and looked up with misty eyes, "Shizun, this disciple doesn't want to leave Shizun....."

Before Jiang Yinghe could reply, Li Huanhan's voice rang out.

"I think that's a great idea."

The man in black stood to the side with his sword in his grasp. He originally had no intention of interfering, but the way Chang Ye fell into Jiang Yinghe's arms rubbed him the wrong way. His blood-red eyes flashed as he approached.

Jiang Yinghe's body had a very faint fragrance. He won't deny that a righteous sword cultivator like him with a cold outside and a warm inside was an appealing choice for a furnace or even a 'meal'.

Qin Jun was a wraith that reeked of resentful energy, and this childish little shidi wasn't anything good either. He didn't know what their intentions were.

Shizun said that he was the only one, but he brought back these mutts.....

Li Huanhan felt like his usually calm nerves were set alight as he watched Jiang Yinghe's hand comfort Chang Ye. This shidi of his was a real eyesore.

"I also want to teach Shidi to the best of my abilities." Li Huanhan looked up. "Shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe knew that his sticky little disciple needed to grow up one day. He was clear on what needed to be done despite Chang Ye's aggrieved expression.

"Be obedient." He rubbed the youth's hair. "At your age you need to learn how to be independent ."

Chang Ye blinked and hugged Jiang Yinghe's waist intending to protest one last time. Yet his gaze slid over to the devil beast on the ground, and then to Qin Jun.

The gray-haired man licked his lips. He always gave off a feeling of hunger when looking at Jiang Yinghe. Chang Ye thought he was even more despicable than the bloodthirsty Li Huanhan.

Jiang Yinghe only raised his head when the little disciple buried in his embrace agreed reluctantly. He used his sixth sense to locate the many disciples that had come to Qing Jing Peak after hearing the bellows of the beast.

"Jun-er....."

"This disciple knows." Qin Jun answered airily, "I'll take the beast to see our Peng Lai's entrance."

His eyes met Jiang Yinghe's for a second, and the word he was planning to throw out got stuck in his throat.

".....I won't kill him," he thought, "because Shizun asked me not to."

—-

Although the devil beast caught by Qin Jun was spared his life, he was forced to sign a contract with Sect Master Zhou to guard Peng Lai in the form of a towering devil statue.

His consciousness was sealed within. But when outsiders entered Peng Lai, he had to abide by his promise and do his utmost to protect the disciples for three hundred years.

Three hundred years was long enough to see those young cultivators grow old, and empires rise and fall. But to those of the devil race, three hundred years was a pittance of time.

This giant statue only solidified Qin-shixiong's reputation among the other disciples. He may look steadfast and decisive, but he had an aura about him that made him unapproachable. Qin-shixiong was more terrifying than the evil creatures he slayed with Zhanyun.

There was a rumour circulating around that Qin-shixiong was the scariest when he smiled.

No one in Peng Lai had really seen the last disciple to arrive, so there was little for them to say about this shidi.

—-

The moon was bright on that cold night.

The night pearl that Jun-er brought back was embedded in the wall. He had also removed the original desk lamp. After Jiang Yinghe returned from his seclusion, he found that Jun-er had made many minor adjustments to his residence.

Cultivators above a certain level were able to forego the need for sleep in favour of simply meditating, but they could still become tired. Jiang Yinghe, however, has maintained the habit of sleeping from nine to six. Before he lost his phone while transmigrating over, he had never slept so early.

Qing Jing peak tended to be quiet and the spirit cranes on guard duty outside were already asleep. The night pearl radiated a soothing light.

But this long silence was disturbed by the presence of another person.

Jiang Yinghe had only left a portion of his senses out, so when he sensed the other's turbulent breathing he rose to see a body curled into a ball beside his bed.

Chang Ye's long black hair and mask obscured half of his face. The seal on his forehead was glowing dimly. There were bite marks on his ruby red lips as he held his knees tightly.

Like a wounded little animal, he came to the one he trusted the most when he was hurt.

Jiang Yinghe's remaining fatigue dissipated. He brushed back Chang Ye's hair and quietly asked, "What's wrong?"

His breathing was rapid, as if he was trying to endure a great deal of pain. He was also very cold even to someone with a naturally lower body temperature like Jiang Yinghe.

Chang Ye looked at him with eyes welling up with tears that could no longer be held back. He slowly climbed into Jiang Yinghe's lap.

"Shizun," he whimpered, "I'm so cold. It feels like my entire body is frozen when I try to circulate energy."

This was an aftereffect from being entombed in ice. The fragile nature of his body was comparable to that of Qin Jun's. Jiang Yinghe felt his chest tighten. Even if he believed that people were the masters of their own fate, he wanted to curse the heavens at this moment.

His little disciple knew how to cry and let others know when he hurt. But the other two were too stoic and determined to carry their burdens alone.....Jiang Yinghe sighed and directed a stream of spiritual energy into Chang Ye's palm.

He was at the Hollowed Cave stage, so connecting veins and purifying the body came naturally to him. But there was nothing he could do to shield his disciples from all the harm they will experience in the world.

It completely escaped his notice that his little disciple that was just crying now had dry eyes and was staring at him with an expression that did not match his age.

There was the soul of an ancient archdevil resting inside the frozen shell called Chang Ye. His perception and sense of pain had become warped. Right now, what he wanted to do most was turn into his original form and pounce on the snow white body before him to see if it would turn red and swollen from irritation when he licked it with his barbed tongue.

It was quite a while before he paused to wonder why he wanted to lick him when he didn't feel hungry.

Jiang Yinghe was none the wiser. He continued to repair his little disciple's spiritual veins while adjusting his sleeve, only to find sword marks littered across the white arm.

Jiang Yinghe's finger twitched, he looked at him and asked, "Did you spar with your shixiongs again?"

Chang Ye heard the worry in his voice. He had deliberately left those wounds unhealed. "I...I wanted to advance as quickly as they do to not lose face for Shizun."

He scooted over while he spoke, like an adorably awkward cat.

"Although Li-shixiong is strict, I can tell that he is kind as well." Chang Ye had a deep understanding about the rose coloured glasses Shizun had on. "Qin-shixiong was not as scary as the rumours made him out to be."

Jiang Yinghe had been focused on stabilizing his realm lately and rarely went out. "Rumours?"

Chang Ye nodded, "I heard the other shixiongs say that Li-shixiong is only good to Shizun and like a block of ice with everyone else. Qin-shixiong, um, is a bit too arrogant....Shizun, I shouldn't say bad things about my shixiongs right?"

His eyes were clear and bright, as if this was really just an innocent mistake that he was sheepish over.

Jiang Yinghe had always been single before he crossed over, and he had been completely dedicated to going home after coming here so he was a thousand-year bachelor. Due to his straight man tendencies, he naturally thought that his little disciple was truly sorry. He comforted, "Don't worry. If their temperaments really are lacking then Shizun will educate them. However, geniuses are often misunderstood by those around them."

Chang Ye sat on his lap, pleased as a peach to be enveloped by his lightly fragrant scent. He did not mind if his words struck home or not, instead tightening his embrace and saying, "Shizun, can I sleep with you?"

He hurried to add, "Just for tonight, okay?"

The youth was too stunning and his tone was pitiful. He was skilled at acting spoiled.

Jiang Yinghe could only withstand it for a while before his heart softened. He thought that this child was so desperate for security and the praise of an elder, showing his immaturity in comparison to his shixongs.

He patted the youth's back, "Just this once, there will be no further exceptions."

"En!"

The two of them were very close together. Jiang Yinghe only relaxed when he felt the other person warm up. A thought suddenly came to mind,

"In the near future, He Huan sect will be hosting the Weapons Conference. I was planning on taking the three of you to attend."

He Huan was a neutral sect, but they were closer to the righteous sects than the demonic ones. Their deputy sect master was Hun Yuan Xianjun Tong Guiyu, a cultivator that has often been mentioned in the same breath as Jiang Yinghe since a thousand years ago.

Chang Ye obediently made a noise of agreement and asked, "Will this disciple receive his sword there?"

"Yes." said Jiang Yinghe, "Huanhan's sword 'Wanwu Canxia' was from the 37th batch of the Sword Viewing Scroll. Jun-er's 'Junzi Tie' was from the 39th."

Upon hearing this, Chang Ye knew that his two 'wonderful' shixiongs had hidden many things. Li Huanhan's blood sword had a countless number of restriction arrays layer upon it, yet it still radiated a strongly demonic aura. The sky would likely start to change colours if even a few were removed.

That silver-gray sword of Qin Jun might look ordinary, but it was filled with miasma. A sword so clearly awakened using resentful energy made its name especially ironic.

Even though there were so many seals on the swords, the only way the two were able to fool Jiang Yinghe was because he did not suspect them in the slightest. They had given him no reason to do so.

Chang Ye suddenly thought that the duo were even more sinister than he had imagined to be able to orchestrate such a complex lie. They definitely had nefarious intentions. His thoughts shifted to how to take out his own soul weapon, Duanshe Li.....

"Rest." Jiang Yinghe felt like he was coaxing a child, "That night pearl was something brought back by you Qin-shixiong. Why do you keep glancing at it? Is it too bright?"

Chang Ye quickly looked away and was about to say no when he paused, "That's.....a pearl from a dragon?"

"En." Jiang Yinghe was becoming drowsy. "A devil from the seas."

Chang Ye glanced thoughtfully at that dragon pearl before snuggling into Shizun's chest and whispering, "Can Shizun change it out? It's too bright."

It was a long while, long enough that he actually thought the other had fallen asleep, before he heard a distant yet warm voice reply.

"Okay."

Author's Corner

Chang Ye: Shizun, this disciple is not purposely badmouthing his shixiongs, it's just that they're not considerate like me QAQ. Shizun look at me, only I can be Shizun's little cotton vest. Those two are too vicious, only I'm determined and hardworking QAQ.

Night Pearl (fed up): You're such a green tea bitch!

OceanofPDF.com

CH12 - HOW TO KILL A MAN (Draft)

The Sword Conference that was held every one hundred years took place either in Peng Lai or He Huan sect.

He Huan's ideology set them apart from the majority of righteous cultivators, but they could not truly be called a demonic sect since they caused no harm to civilians. Their sect master was crippled a few hundred years ago, and so the majority of his duties were delegated to the deputy sect master Tong Guiyu.

Peng Lai sect consisted mostly of sword cultivators, so this grand event was highly anticipated and discussed amongst the disciples.

"Isn't sending ten cloud vessels a little too conspicuous?" said a disciple in green as he elbowed his shixiong beside him, "I thought our Sect Master preferred to stay under the radar."

The spiritual vessels resembled clouds and unfurled in response to the winds. They could travel thousands of kilometers a day and carry a great deal as well. It was truly magnificent to see so many assembled in the skies.

"Consider the occasion," the elder disciple who already had a weapon replied, "the Sword Conference only happens once in a century unlike the competitions that occur every ten years. And this time Xuan Wei Xianjun will also be attending."

"Jiang Xianjun?!" The other exclaimed. He continued in a quieter voice, "Is it for that rumoured last disciple of his?"

After the one called Chang Ye was taken in by the Xianjun, some people in the sect have been speculating that Xuan Wei Xianjun wouldn't be accepting any more disciples.

"Last disciple, huh." The elder disciple grit his teeth, "Is he another monster like Li Huanhan or Qin Jun? I don't know how they're cultivating to always be one step ahead of everyone else. It must be due to the Xianjun's tutelage...."

All the cloud vessels suddenly shook as if they had received a command.

Everyone immediately went silent. Then the elder disciples controlling the vessels could all be seen kneeling skyward, with their hands cupped and their weapons disarmed.

"What.....what's going....." A younger disciple stared at the scene in confusion and was just about to ask what was happening before his shixiong pushed him down. He pointed to the sky.

The disciple in green peered upward cautiously. Above their heads, seven humongous white spirit cranes pulled a carriage draped in silvery gauze behind them.

"Jiang Xianjun has arrived." whispered his shixiong, "We're taking off our weapons to show respect to the millennia he has dedicated to the study of the sword. To have Jiang Xianjun accompany us is an honour that comes once in a lifetime."

After the disciples paid their respects, the cloud vessels split and surged towards the horizon. The carriage above them brought up the rear.

Inside, Jiang Yinghe perused the latest edition of the Sword Viewing Scroll, but he was still unable to find a suitable weapon for Chang Ye.

There were countless swords listed inside, and a few would be awarded to the best performing contestants at the Sword Conference as encouragement for the younger generation.

Jiang Yinghe read it several times, then closed his eyes to think about it some more. He heard familiar footsteps approach.

He didn't need to look to know that it was Li Huanhan.

The sound of tea pouring could be heard. Its warm, delicate scent spread through the room.

Jiang Yinghe opened his eyes to see a cup being presented to him. He praised his disciple in his heart as he took a sip. "Where's Jun-er?"

Those blood-red eyes flashed with a hint of barely restraint resentment. Li Huanhan replied evenly, "A few devils from the Wind Tribe drew near as we crossed over the central province. Qin-shidi is offering protection to the cloud vessels below."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. As he thought, those words of rebuke from that 'Hundred Year Ranking of Notable Cultivators' were pure rubbish.

"Go help him if necessary," he ordered.

Jiang Yinghe was about to rub his head like he always did when he noticed how tall the other had become. When he went to withdraw his hand from midair, it was captured in Li Huanhan's grasp.

The fingers of sword cultivators tended to be long and deceptively strong. Yet the hand that had held a blood-red sword for so long was afraid to hold his Shizun's snow-white skin with too much force.

The thought only passed through his head for a moment before Li Huanhan remembered that the person in front of him was a Xianjun who had already passed two Hollowed Cave tribulations. He wasn't a fragile ornament, and his hesitation could one day come back to bite him.

Although Jiang Yinghe's skin was pleasantly cool like a piece of jade, it felt like he was being burned where they made contact. Li Huanhan felt his ancient heart skip a beat. He quickly let go of his Shizun and said, "This disciple will go help."

There was a strangely hasty quality to his voice. The way he released his hand also felt weird.

Jiang Yinghe was still holding his tea in one hand as he watched his normally tactile first disciple hurry out of the crane-drawn carriage. He glanced at his wrist, then at Li Huanhan's rapidly departing back with confusion.

"What's the matter with him?" Jiang Yinghe couldn't figure it out after some time. He rubbed his cup and came to the conclusion that maybe his disciple was all grown up and didn't want head pats from his Shizun anymore.

—-

The farthest cloud vessel was empty except for Qin Jun.

The statement that he was 'offering protection to the cloud vessels' was only half true.

They would be attacked by those wind devils if he wasn't here, but Qin Jun was actually guarding someone else.

Several wind devils made contact with the silver-gray sword's edge. Their blood slowly trickled down the sharp surface. With a single movement, Qin Jun hacked open several devils' skulls to reveal the devil cores within.

Suddenly, the sound of a flute pierced through the clouds and swept the two cores into another person's waiting hand.

Qin Jun turned around to glare at the mask-wearing Chang Ye standing on the edge of the vessel. He was wearing clothes suitable for a night hunt with his long black hair flowing freely in the wind.

Chang Ye tossed the cores in the air a few times, before throwing them into his mouth like they were candy. The sound of crunching could be heard. He smiled at Qin Jun as if he really meant no harm.

"Qin-shixiong," Chang Ye said with a great deal of mirth, "thanks for treating me."

Qin Jun remained where he was with Zhanyun vibrating dangerously in his hand. His lips twitched to reveal a bloodthirsty grin.

"I have something even better here, would little Shidi like to try some?"

Chang Ye looked at him with his head in his hands. Half of his face was as pretty as a picture, and the other half was covered by a pure black mask. He yawned before replying, "Judging by your insatiable appetite, does Shixiong want to eat me? I heard that the souls of righteous cultivators are considered a delicacy to ghosts, is that true?"

He seemed to be genuinely curious, but also as if he was just joking. "Isn't that right, Qin-shixiong? You would know considering you're a bloodless, fleshless wraith."

Qin Jun's body was just a vessel. His true power could only be released after abandoning his mortal guise.

"Wraith....." Qin Jun repeated the word, a look of ridicule in his steel-gray eyes. "And what about you? You stink of blood, just like a devil beast."

Chang Ye's face showed none of his anger. He laughed while nodding, "Shixiong must love to hunt beasts like me. Like these wind devils, or that guard dog back at the sect, and even....."

He raised his hand, revealing a lustrous pearl that shone with an inner light. It was being rolled between Chang Ye's fingers.

".....A dragon from the depths of the sea." Chang Ye stared at him and said, "Qin-shixiong, did you really think the Shizun treasured your little gifts?"

His fingertips tightened and shattered the dragon pearl. Dust rained down from his hand.

"Qin Jun," there was a wicked smile on Chang Ye's fair face, "you have no place in Jiang Yinghe's heart, so you might as well give up on your dreams to deceive or eat him."

The remains of the pearl were scattered by the wind.

The gray youth in front of him was motionless, his eyes open but unseeing. Cold air was drawn into his lungs.

Qin Jun's murderous intent reached a crescendo as the noise emanated from his silver sword became louder.

From a certain perspective, Chang Ye accomplished his goal.

This wraith was truly angry now.

—-

The dimensional array he put down visibly rippled.

Li Huanhan raised his head to where Qin Jun used to be standing. He could sense a strong devilish energy from inside the layer of enchantment.

It was that little shidi of his.

Li Huanhan set another layer and glanced at the unsuspecting Peng Lai disciples on the other cloud vessels. He moved to stand above the array and expressionlessly watched as the two exchanged blows.

A chilling column of miasma crept up one side of the dimension's boundaries, sticky and viscous like tar. And the supposedly 'innocent and pure' shidi who 'just started to cultivate' had characteristic devil markings appearing on his face. He gave off the aura of an ancient archdevil.

Li Huanhan observed dispassionately from the sidelines. Trying to decipher the identities of the other two, he turned his attention to his palm.

A blood-red eyeball appeared from a crack in the middle and exclaimed, "How did you manage to contain devilish energy this pure in a dimensional array?! Xuehe? Xuehe?!"

Li Huanhan replied, "This lord merely secured it with a second layer of enchantments. Can you discern anything about their origins?"

The eyeball spun for a bit, like it wanted to haggle prices with Li Huanhan. In the end it backed off and started to work. "That gray-haired one resembles the Spirit Patriarch from three thousand years ago who was able to subsume thousands of worlds with the Zhanyun sword. I heard that he was born a resentful ghost, so his spirit was scattered by heavenly lightning during ascension..... Can't believe this guy came back from that."

Li Huanhan confirmed his guess. He asked, "And the other one?"

"The other one is like.....his markings are like Tianhou's from historical records. That thing used to be huge....."

"Understood." Li Huanhan clenched his fist. The eyeball immediately sunk back into his flesh. With a gesture, he summoned his blood sword and glided past the dimension's boundaries, stepping in between the two.

He raised a hand and collapsed the array while saying in a cold voice, "Settle down. You won't be able to kill anyone like this." His tone shifted slightly before continuing, "Besides, you'll disturb Shizun's tea time."

Author's Corner

Jiang Yinghe: My disciples are obedient and kind, warm and loving..... I'm not blind you guys!

Everyone else: .....Xianjun, please get the prescription on your rose-coloured glasses checked.

Jiang Yinghe's just chilling and drinking tea while all this is happening below him lol.

!

Report Chapter

OceanofPDF.com

CH13 - THE DEDICATION OF SISTERS (Draft)

Peng Lai sect's formation was almost too extravagant.

The fleet of cloud vessels captured everyone's attention as they arrived at He Huan sect. Although some were interested in their younger generation, most were focused on the crane-led carriage that was the last to arrive.

The curtain parted by itself to one side as a man as slim and tall as bamboo stepped out from within.

Xuan Wei Xianjun was clothed in pure white without a single blemish and his hair was secured with a silver crown. His sharp features combined with lips that had the slightest hint of colour gave off a cold and distant air, like a blade that had been honed for millennia.

This was in line with his reputation. Many people held their breath in fear of disturbing him. Some female disciples even became enamoured with him at first glance despite themselves.

There were four major righteous sects in the cultivation world, with Peng Lai as their leader. The others were the Ying Zhou school that specialized in creating artifacts, the Yao Wang valley that produced both medicine and poison, and the matriarchal Guang Han palace. He Huan sect was the largest of the neutral faction, with the rest being too numerous to count.

Up to 90% of all the individuals on the 'Hundred Year Ranking of Notable Cultivators' were affiliated with a major sect. However, only those belonging to the righteous way were listed. Ever since the Tian Muo

school's Xuehe Demon Lord fell, it had fractured into three factions that remained divided even a thousand years later.

He Huan sect's female disciples tended to be very bold and straightforward. A female sword cultivator in red was captivated. She asked, "How has Xuan Wei Xianjun remained single? Is it that his expectations are too high or some other reason?"

Her companion shoved her and laughed, "Don't you know about that rumour? .....Even if that's not true, you're not a match for any of his disciples, let alone him."

The girl in red wanted to retort before she saw a dark-clothed man walk over to Jiang Yinghe and whisper something in his ear. His features were chiseled, and his blood-red eyes were brooding. He was way too handsome for his own good.

The He Huan disciple choked on her words. Then a gray-haired youth came bounding over. An incredibly sharp feeling emanated from his dashing features. That, combined with his mischievous smirk, was a deadly combination.

She was rendered utterly speechless, only able to mutter, ".....I can do it."

Her companion teased her, "Your lack of experience in worldly matters is obvious. Li Huanhan and Qin Jun might be second and fifth on the list of notable individuals, but they're dead last when it comes to being suitable partners.....damn!"

She suddenly stopped talking. There was a new face following behind Jiang Yinghe. He seemed to be only seventeen at most and still resembled a teen, but his otherworldly beauty was apparent even at a distance.

Just as she swore, that half-masked youth turned and seemed to sweep his gaze in their direction.

Was he sculpted by the gods?! I would die happy if I was able to hold his hand even once!

This must be Jiang Xianjun's little disciple? Was he accepting them based on appearance or something?! Many questions arose in the minds of the He Huan disciple, but she still drew closer to the red cultivator and said in a confident tone, "If elder sister can do it, then so can I!"

The thought of these two were not unique, many He Huan disciples had a strange feeling that their worldview expanded today. There was talk about somehow getting their contact information later at the Sword Conference. Recruiting any of those exceptional individuals into the sect would be a meritorious deed!

The disciples watching from afar felt their eyes grow numb with all the handsome men around. The He Huan Protector that came to guide their guests was just a cherry on top.

He Huan's Protector was a Nascent Soul cultivator surnamed He. He was immediately pinned by three pairs of eyes as he greeted Jiang Yinghe. After an unspoken, hair-raising interrogation, the trio looked away without a second glance.

Protector He let out a sigh of relief. His back was already soaked through with sweat. Suddenly he felt that although Jiang Xianjun looked distant, he was actually the kindest one present.

"Our deputy sect master is eagerly awaiting your arrival," he said, "please come with me."

Jiang Yinghe replied, "Then we will have to trouble you."

"It is an honour to guide you, no trouble at all."

Jiang Yinghe followed Protector He deeper into He Huan when he suddenly recalled that Qin Jun was fending off attacks by the wind devils to protect the fleet. He turned to ask, "Are you hurt?"

Chang Ye by his other side touched his mask. The obscured half of his mouth curled up in a sneer. How can those little birds possibly harm him? And even if he was hurt, Qin Jun was too proud to ever admit it.

Qin Jun was somewhat volatile right now. His mind was filled with the scene of Chang Ye crushing the dragon pearl. His killing intent waxed and waned, accompanied by a sense of confusion. Why was he so angry?

How could Jiang Yinghe give his gifts so carelessly to others? Even if he didn't want them, it would have been more acceptable had he thrown them away rather than.....

Qin Jun was too busy eating vinegar to reply immediately. He said, "Yes."

With that, not only Chang Ye, but also Li Huanhan looked over.

Jiang Yinghe slowed his steps and slightly furrowed his brows, "Were you planning to remain silent if I didn't ask you?"

Jun-er and those wind devils were all at the Nascent Soul stage, but there was a group of them and only one of him. How could he have been so relaxed? Jiang Yinghe admonished himself as he reached over to examine his disciple's injuries. His finger was caught by Qin Jun, who turned his hand around to reveal his wrist.

There was a long and deep gash on Qin Jun's narrow wrist that had already stopped bleeding.

Jiang Yinghe knew that both his constitution and core were fragile and could not withstand injuries. This injury would probably take a long time for Qin Jun to heal by himself.

He did not mind that his finger was in the other's grasp and instead began to fix his body out of habit.

Li Huanhan glared darkly at their conjoined hands. He could feel the sword stored in his blood begin to shift at the irritating sight.

It seems he needed to cut a certain ghost's claws off later.

Jiang Yinghe's finger was very pleasing to look at and the skin had a soft sheen as if it was made from frost. However, the place where his palm touched Qin Jun's injured wrist was warm.

"How many stances have you mastered of the Xingdou sword style I taught you before?" Jiang Yinghe took this opportunity to ask about his training.

Qin Jun's steel-gray eyes never left him, "Replying to Shizun, I have completed all of it."

"Too fast." Jiang Yinghe frowned out of concern, "Show me when we get back."

The turmoil and frustration in Qin Jun's mind evaporated like smoke. His gaze was always on his Shizun's long eyelashes. He smelled the fragrance that emanated from his soul.

For some reason that he couldn't explain, he leaned closer, "Yes, when we return..."

Qin Jun's voice was not low, but there was a gritty undertone. His slightly hot breath fell on Jiang Yinghe's ear. The person himself didn't mind, but Li Huanhan could not tolerate anymore of this.

He ended their conversation by guiding Shizun away from Qin Jun.

"Shizun," he gestured before them, "we have arrived at He Huan palace."

Jiang Yinghe remained oblivious to the infighting among his disciples. He turned around to see a man in red waiting at the entrance with a slight smile.

"I've been waiting for quite a while." Tong Guiyu said with a wave, "It's so difficult to get you to visit me."

Jiang Yinghe directed a look at the other Weakened Cave stage Xianjun. "I would visit more if you stop sending me dual cultivation manuals. A technique as dubious as taking yin energy to replenish the yang might be commonplace for your He Huan sect, but those of Peng Lai will have nothing to do with it.

Tong Guiyu could only smile when his bad habit from centuries ago was exposed. "You still remember that?"

Jiang Yinghe thought back to that time, and gave him a warning glance. "My disciples are all good children, but their constitutions are weak and they cannot touch this kind of thing. They are still young, so don't blame me for retaliating if you try something."

Tong Guiyu was most well known for his illusions and He Huan's hypnosis techniques. He was a playboy in his youth that loved to sleep around. Many people were fooled by him at least once.

Jiang Yinghe met him before he became famous when he was travelling. In order to break through one of his illusions, he almost dealt a serious 'injury' to this Hun Yuan Xianjun.

Tong Guiyu did not dare to be on his bad side. He glanced over his disciples and couldn't help but complain in his heart, "How did a crane like him raise a bunch of vicious little carnivores?"

He didn't say this out loud, of course. He led Jiang Yinghe inside while taking a better look at these disciples that he has heard so much about lately.

Li Huanhan was self-explanatory. He wore only black with a face carved out of ice that radiated ruthlessness. Qin Jun was fine when he was with Jiang Yinghe, but there was still a cold aura around him.

Tong Guiyu directed his gaze down to the youngest child. His skin was fair like jade and his features exquisite. Finally someone that had a trace of warmth...

Just as he thought this, Chang Ye turned to look at him with a smile that was not a smile-

He was suddenly reminded of a poisonous flower. Under the boy's innocent and beautiful exterior was a deadly promise.

Gui Tongyu felt a migraine coming on. He wanted to say something to Jiang Yinghe, but then he saw this carnivorous flower become as docile as a kitten when his Shizun stroked his hair.

Tong Guiyu: ???

....WTF is this situation?!

Author's Corner

Yun Buxiu: !!! Finally someone who understands what I had to endure! I just might start crying QAQ

OceanofPDF.com

CH14 - A FAKE ZHANYUN SWORD (Draft)

That strange sense of menace seemed like an illusion that only lasted an instant. When Tong Guiyu blinked, the fair, obedient youth in front of him was perfectly normal.

Tong Guiyu wondered if his eyes were playing tricks on him

The two stepped into the uppermost seats overlooking where the Sword Conference was set to take place. Jiang Yinghe only had his disciples beside him while Tong Guiyu was surrounded by several delicate youths.

However, judging solely based on appearance, Chang Ye would easily win even if there were ten more male furnaces present. Even someone as removed from worldly desires as Jiang Yinghe sometimes suspected that his little disciple was disfigured because the heavens were jealous of his features.

And at this moment, half of his face was covered by a black mask depicting the outline of a savage beast. The protective seal between his brows was only partially visible like his clear eyes and ruby lips. He was affectionately leaning on the seated Jiang Yinghe.

"Shizun," he began in a small voice, "I took that dragon pearl that used to hang in your room out before we left."

Jiang Yinghe frowned lightly, "What did you need a dragon pearl for?"

That night, Chang Ye said that the night pearl at his residence was too bright. Jiang Yinghe also didn't want this kind of precious treasure to just be

used as a light, which is why he put it away in a box. It was not done in secret so of course Chang Ye knew where it was.

Since this present showed Jun-er's respect for his teacher, it was natural for Jiang Yinghe to want to preserve it. Who would have thought this little guy would have taken it first?

"This disciple fashioned it into a pendant." Chang Ye blinked innocently as he took out a red string from beneath his clothes. There was a bright pearl on it. "I asked Qin-shixiong. Since Shizun wasn't using it and the dragon pearl's nature complimented my own, I...Shizun wouldn't blame Ye-er, right?"

This pearl was definitely not the one gifted by Qin Jun, but it was a genuine dragon pearl of a high quality.

Upon hearing that he had run it past Qin Jun first, Jiang Yinghe did not mind it as much. Still, he reached out a hand to knock on his head. "Who did you learn to act before asking for permission from?

Chang Ye made a show of ducking, then shot a naughty smile at him. He turned to look at his shixiongs standing nearby.

From an outsider's perspective, Li Huanhan and Qin Jun seemed very close and struck a pleasing image where they stood to converse. But it was very clear to Chang Ye that this was all a farce.

One of them was a schemer who, no matter how deeply he hid the possessiveness in his eyes, radiated it in every one of his movements. The other was even more straightforward and was patiently biding his time by Jiang Yinghe's side for an opportunity to consume him.

The ancient archdevil who thought himself the most righteous of the bunch nodded in his head. If his tail could be out right now, he would be unable to resist wrapping it around his Shizun's waist.

Chang Ye couldn't help but turn around to look at Jiang Yinghe again. He could barely see the outline of his Shizun's body through the snow white

cloak he wore. A ribbon the colour of the moon embroidered with plum blossoms encircled his slender waist.

He withdrew his gaze to his own hands. At his original size, he could press that waist to the ground with one paw, covering it completely. Shizun probably wouldn't even be able to move.

While the little disciple's thoughts veered off course, countless cultivators entered the stands below. Almost every practitioner was present, regardless if they belonged to the righteous, neutral or rogue faction.

Protector He who guided Jiang Yinghe before climbed to the center of the stage in a new outfit. He said a few customary greetings to begin. Then, before the eyes of the audience, he suddenly changed the topic. "Everyone here must have heard of the Sword Viewing Scroll, which contains a ranking of all the known famous swords in the world. It is a great fortune that the conference is taking place at He Huan sect this time.

Our deputy sect master has come across a spiritual weapon in recent years worthy of being added to the rankings. It will be presented as one of the prizes for the younger generation."

After these words scattered discussion erupted below.

"Worthy of entering the Sword Viewing Scroll? It's not going to be placed at the bottom tier, right?"

"And what's wrong with that? The Qianlong Zaiyuan sword at rank 99 belongs to Elder Wang of Yao Wang valley..."

"Pah, Hun Yuan Xianjun's cutting pretty deep into his pockets this time. If he dares to show it in front of Jiang Xianjun who's practised sword cultivation for a thousand years, it must be a real treasure!"

With Jiang Yinghe and Tong Guiyu's hearing, they could clearly listen in on the conversations below if they wanted. The degree of privacy between cultivators was determined mainly based on how high their level of cultivation was.

Jiang Yinghe took a sip of his tea and asked Tong Guiyu who was seated across from him, "Can it enter the top ten?"

Tong Guiyu smiled mysteriously, "Higher than that."

Higher than top ten? Jiang Yinghe became slightly interested. He glanced over to see that He Huan Elder He made a hand seal and unseal a heavy restriction with some difficulty. A silver longsword gradually emerged from a portal in midair.

This sword was a grayish-silver with hundreds of ghosts traveling through the night carved onto its hilt. Wisps of dark miasma occasionally drifted out.

The audience was shocked into silence. A horrifying thought emerged uncontrollably from their hearts. The arena became quiet enough to hear a pin drop. Everyone stared at this evil sword with halted breath.

"I trust that everyone knows of the Zhanyun sword!" Protector He said loudly, "Three thousand years ago, the Spirit Patriarch passed through his fifth test of mentality and became the first ghost cultivator to ascend. And his weapon, the Zhanyun sword, became a founding treasure of the undead!"

"Like its name implies, Zhanyun is able to sever the fates of others without exception. It was with this sword and his despicable wraith constitution that the Spirit Patriarch was able to withstand seven whole rounds of heavenly lightning from the Dao!"

Some people in the silent audience seemed to swallow back their desire.

"The sword you see before you was reforged from a fragment of the original after it shattered following the defeat of the Spirit Patriarch. But its miasma is too thick and unsuitable for the techniques our He Huan sect practices, which is why the deputy sect master is willing to offer it to the sword cultivator with the best performance at the conference today!"

Protector He's voice was filled with reluctance, and the audience also breathed a sigh of relief. It seems that this sword could be used without restriction. If it was the original Zhanyun sword, merely unsheathing it would send all the underground ghost cultivators into a frenzy and invite them to come and take it by force.

Even so, the sword cultivators below had been suitably impressed by the weapon's origins. The sounds of their fevered discussion merged into a dull roar.

And in the platform above, Li Huanhan asked without moving his eyes, "Zhanyun sword? Fragments?"

Qin Jun narrowed his eyes beside him and smiled. "A high quality forgery."

Li Huanhan glanced at him. "There's even forgeries?"

Forgeries was too light of a word to describe the situation three thousand years ago when ghost cultivation reigned supreme. There were almost as many 'Zhanyun' swords as there were hands. All the ghost cultivators preferred a silver-gray sword body, and this 'Zhanyun sword fragment' could just be one of those fakes. Only the passage of time was true.

Qin Jun retorted lazily, "As if you don't have any."

Li Huanhan carefully considered this. There really weren't any copies of his blood sword. But demonic cultivators were so desperate for the cultivation benefits that the heavenly demon physique provided that an artifact to change one's eyes to a blood-red colour was popular for a while.

At the time he controlled the Heavenly Demon school. It was like a terribly sharp sword that cut down all the obstacles in Li Huanhan's path. Due to that, the artifact was a short lived trend because everyone who dared to use it was killed for 'treason'.

While the audience remained excited, Qin Jun was too bored to even give that forgery a second glance. He instead approached his Shizun and pulled

his 'cute' little shidi over. He lowered his head and said with a smile, "Little shidi doesn't have a sword yet, so he should pay closer attention."

Chang Ye used an unknown method to have a short conversation with Jiang Yinghe before, so Qin Jun couldn't clearly hear what they talked about. His intuition told him this was not a good thing.

The brutal rage archdevils were known for flashed in Chang Ye's eyes as he was unceremoniously dragged away from Jiang Yinghe's side. The resentment in his eyes soon faded when Jiang Yinghe spoke.

"Jun-er is right. You should be more focused, Chang Ye."

Although Shizun's voice was cold and distant, there was a unique warmth when he called his name. Chang Ye swallowed minutely and was about to reply when Qin Jun tossed him in Li Huanhan's direction.

Qin Jun smirked, "Look after him, Shixiong."

That's how this carnivorous flower masquerading as a little white lotus landed in Li Huanhan's hands. And his demonic shixiong coldly grasped the scruff of his neck to secure his shidi. He replied in a calm voice, "En."

It might just be him, but Jiang Yinghe felt that...Huanhan and Jun-er got along like a house on fire when it came to disciplining Chang Ye. It was as if two mortal enemies who couldn't wait for the other to die already started working together to take care of an interloper...

Jiang Yinghe spaced out while looking at the progress bars on the display. He quickly shook his head to clear those thoughts.

What was he thinking? With a role model as strict and well-mannered as he was, his disciples must all be the epitome of righteousness and bursting with love for their sect siblings!

Jiang Yinghe nodded and patted himself on the back. This must be a sign of the deep affection between his disciples!

Author's Corner

Jiang Yinghe (with 20 km long disciple-loving glasses): Quit trying to mess with my deductions!

The inspiration for Chang Ye's name came from Su Shi's work 'Snow Under the Stars': I don't mind the long night wrinkling my clothes, but I fear the sting of the rising sun in my eyes.

The inspiration for Li Huanhan's name is too famous and doesn't need to be said.

OceanofPDF.com

CH15 - AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT (Draft)

The 'Zhanyun sword' below became one of the prizes of the Sword Conference.

The Sword Viewing Scroll only listed spiritual weapons whose locations were currently known. For example, the Jimie sword wielded by the Xuehe Demon Lord a thousand years ago was not recorded in it. There were even fewer weapons that were available to the younger generation.

Tong Guiyu held his chin and gestured for one of his servants to bring a chess set over. He mused, "Do you think it can enter the top five?"

He was referring to the reforged founding treasure. Jiang Yinghe thought about it before replying, "Why ask when you know the answer?"

Tong Guiyu laughed heartily, "Didn't you come to find a sword for your disciple? Are there no good ones left in Jiang Xianjun's personal collection?"

Jiang Yinghe shot a glance at him. "None of them are suitable for my youngest disciple. Rather....."

He paused and slightly furrowed his brows. "The Hongyan sword in Tong Xianjun's hands is a good match."

Tong Guiyu suddenly choked and almost coughed his lungs out before grabbing onto Jiang Yinghe's snowy white sleeve. "It's true that Hongyan likes beauties and that youngest disciple of yours fits the bill, but this is a

dual cultivation sword! What wisdom can a thousand-year bachelor like you possibly impart about this subject?"

At first Jiang Yinghe was able to listen with a straight face, but the words 'thousand-year bachelor' reminded him of the fact that he's never had a girlfriend before. Even the cranes in his front yard were all male. His face immediately turned black and he shot back, "Does my decision to remain abstinent concern you? Let go."

Just when Tong Guiyu wanted to say more, a stinging pain ran up the hand that held Jiang Yinghe's sleeve. He retracted his arm reflexively and looked up to see Qin Jun who was listening in from the side retrieve the snow white sleeve with a smile.

.....His expression made him uncomfortable for some reason.

Everyone in the cultivation world was sure that someone with a tragic backstory like Qin Jun wouldn't live long, but everyone that met him felt like they would probably die first by meeting someone like him.

Qin Jun's steel-gray eyes looked at everything with a lazy and bored expression. But when his interest was aroused, people started to fear for their lives. The only exception was towards his Shizun.

Tong Guiyu was very experienced. He immediately understood what was going on after that exchange. He continued, "Abstinence is fine and all, but have you heard of a story like this?"

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes. "What are you talking about?"

Tong Guiyu glanced at Qin Jun and saw this gray-haired man who supposedly had a 'weak constitution' place his hand lightly on Jiang Yinghe's shoulder. His gaze was fixated on his Shizun's white neck like it was a delicacy he was saving for later.

Tong Guiyu considered his words carefully. "I heard that sword cultivators that are as pure as you are especially at risk of being taken advantage of by someone of the younger generation. Disciples, for example....."

"Impossible." Jiang Yinghe replied without hesitation.

His certainty surprised not only Tong Guiyu but also Qin Jun, who waited with baited breath for his next words.

"It is impossible for disciples raised in an environment like Peng Lai to disrespect their teacher and elders." Jiang Yinghe said with conviction. "If someone like that appeared, this master would be first to strike them down."

Tong Guiyu: "......I feel like we're not talking about the same type of disrespect."

Jiang Yinghe paused, "There's another type?"

Tong Guiyu looked at Qin Jun, then at the nearby Li Huanhan and Chang Ye. He tried to explain. "Yeah...more like the type in He Huan....."

He was interrupted by a shrill voice filled with resentment that was amplified by a sound technique from below. It even drowned out Protector He who was explaining the rules of the Sword Conference.

"Protector He, the bias of this Sword Viewing Scroll of yours is too obvious. This junior has heard that Xuan Wei Xianjun's weapon Wangchen was forged from ice. How can something like that be considered a sword?!"

Tong Guiyu's voice trailed off as he glanced downwards.

The Wangchen sword was sometimes just referred to as the 'Snow Sword' by some. It was ranked number two in the Sword Viewing Scroll. It was true that the body of the sword was made from ice, and it was more cold than it was sharp. After a millennia of cultivation with Jiang Yinghe, the sword took on the characteristics of its wielder and became more clear and restrained instead of its initial jagged appearance.

The voice continued.

"And those supposed heroes from the Hundred Year Ranking that Protector He mentioned, that Li Huanhan and the one surnamed Qin, how are they worthy of the honour? One has the heavenly demon physique and the other

was corrupted by countless ghosts. Jiang Xianjun has probably been feeding them some miraculous pills to forcefully raise their cultivation!

Shame on Peng Lai for claiming to be the foremost righteous sect while wasting resources on these pieces of trash instead of raising those with true talents. Are you not afraid of alienating others by turning a blind eye to this for the sake of reputation?!"

This rant sparked murmured discussions in the audience. The Peng Lai disciples present were all infuriated. Their leader was even pacing around and gesturing at that person with disgust. "Son of a bitch is even using a Nascent Soul level technique to make his voice louder. Fucker's not even good enough to touch the sole of Li-shixiong's shoes!

I doubt he can back up those baseless accusations. What foundation being built up by pills?! Our Shixiong can even topple mountains in a simple dispute!"

Although the Peng Lai disciples were itching to teach this braggart a lesson, they did not dare to do so because Jiang Yinghe was watching from above.

As the surrounding conversations grew louder, a Nascent Soul cultivator stepped out of the crowd. His true age was hard to discern from his still youthful appearance. He saluted arrogantly in the direction of where Jiang Yinghe was seated. "This junior Lu Zhifeng urges Jiang Xianjun to accept at least one promising disciple. Those wastrels....."

Jiang Yinghe only showed a reaction to the last few words. A pale blue wave of subzero cold pressure slammed down on Lu Zhifeng, forcing both his knees deep into the ground.

The audience gasped and looked up to see the person originally conversing pleasantly with Hun Yuan Xianjun lift a hand to part the curtain of He Huan Tower.

That hand was whiter than frost, with long and well-defined fingers. The embroidery on his sleeve shone slightly in the sunlight, but his voice was chilling enough to send shivers down everyone's spine.

"The path to forming a nascent soul is not easy." He said lightly. "You should place more value on your life."

Seeing that the person below showed no intention to retreat, Jiang Yinghe withdrew his hand. His eyes met Li Huanhan's gaze.

There was no need for words between the two of them, Jiang Yinghe understood his intentions. He also thought his first disciple was more gentle than his second. Although he was angry, he believed that Li Huanhan would show restraint. No matter the circumstance, it would be a shame to lose a Nascent Soul cultivator.

After Jiang Yinghe inclined his head in acceptance, Li Huanhan leaped down onto the center of the circular arena. A blood red longsword emerged from his hand, and he saluted Lu Zhifeng in a manner used by sword practitioners to show their intention for a bout.

There was suddenly a hot breath at his ear. Qin Jun approached and asked, "Shizun, why didn't you send me?"

Jiang Yinghe felt his ears become itchy and reached up to rub it. "Your Shixiong is known for his even temperament. Just look at how respectfully he saluted just now. If it was you, you would probably reach for your sword at the slightest provocation. How can I bear to send you?"

The only reason Qin Jun wanted to draw his sword was because his Shizun had been insulted.

"This disciple is just....." Qin Jun couldn't take it anymore. His hand went to brush back the hair at Jiang Yinghe's nape. He was intercepted by a familiar figure that dove into his Shizun's lap once again.

Chang Ye stared up with watery eyes. "Shizun, Li-shixiong can beat that guy right? Is it true that Shizun only accepted me out of pity?"

Jiang Yinghe did not anticipate this little ancestor of his had so many thoughts running through his head. He stroked his hair and said, "I chose all of you based on your exceptional aptitudes."

Chang Ye acted cute for a while before surreptitiously knocking off his Qin-shixiong's hand from Shizun's shoulder. He continued in a wronged voice, "Shizun, Li-shixiong wouldn't hurt him too badly right? Although he's strict with me, I know that's because I'm his shidi. But if he treats others that way....."

It was out of consideration for this that Jiang Yinghe sent Li Huanhan. He held his youngest disciple and spoke a few more words of comfort. "Your shixiong may not say much, but he's a very easygoing person. Truly....."

An intense burst of sword energy interrupted his words. A deathly silence descended on the originally lively stage below.

Tong Guiyu took a long swig of wine as if he was building up his courage. He carefully said, "Comrade Jiang....."

"En?"

"Your disciple, he's..... He's shattered his opponent's core."

Jiang Yinghe: ".....What?"

He was genuinely speechless for a second. He turned to see his disciple standing quietly where he was before with not a speck of blood on his sword, as if it was freshly unsheathed. But that cultivator called Lu Zhifeng had already collapsed to the ground, unconscious.

While Jiang Yinghe was in a stupor, Chang Ye pulled slightly on his sleeve. "This person disrespected Shizun so it's natural for Shixong to get a bit mad."

"Right." Even Qin Jun spoke up for Li Huanhan. "Swords have no eyes. This was an accident because Shixiong was trying too hard to spare his life."

Jiang Yinghe: ".....Was it like that?"

Qin Jun and Chang Ye: "Yep!"

Tong Guiyu who saw the whole thing go down: "....."

That's quite an accident!

Author's Corner

It was only after your Shizun was misled like this by you guys many times that he realized you were bullying him. When I was writing this I remembered a post I saw once. The OP asked: What should I do if I accidentally become a pig? And the first answer was: That's quite an accident! Hahahaha.

!

Report Chapter

OceanofPDF.com

CH16 - SHIZUN, I'M SCARED (Draft)

No one dared to speak.

There were hundreds of thousands of cultivators attending the Sword Conference, some of them notable heroes of the era. And in front of their very eyes, this Lu Zhifeng who has been at the peak of the Nascent Soul stage for many years was crippled by a single blow from Li Huanhan.

With a shattered core, his cultivation level became no different than that of a mortal and needed to be rebuilt from the ground up. Sparing his life could almost be described as a cruel mercy. The most unusual aspect of this was the fact that a cultivator of the same realm as his opponent was defeated in one strike.

Only the Peng Lai disciples felt gratified by this outcome. They knew that Li-shixiong was always this overbearing. There was a reason that everyone avoided Qing Jing Peak, and it wasn't purely out of consideration for Jiang Xianjun.

Li Huanhan was still young by the standards of the cultivation world and relatively unknown. But those of Peng Lai thought that he rather resembled a king of hell with those blood-red eyes that made people want to avert their gaze.

Li Huanhan stood still in the silence. He withdrew that blood-coloured sword shining with a sinister light into his body.

For some reason everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

Li Huanhan only had eyes for the one seated atop He Huan tower.

To break the tense atmosphere, Tong Guiyu spoke out. "Since the innocence of Comrade Cheng and Peng Lai has been proven, Protector Liu, you may continue."

Protector Liu watched as Li Huanhan returned to the tower. He knew in his heart that even he could not avoid that move just now. He sighed and tried to calm his frazzled nerves.

The interrupted Sword Conference resumed.

Jiang Yinghe pinched the bridge of his nose. He wanted to say something but held back in the end. "We will talk about this later."

Tong Guiyu laughed when he heard this. "Peng Lai seems fond of punishing its disciples behind closed doors. In my opinion, your disciples were right: swords really are blind. No one would say anything even if you killed him."

Jiang Yinghe shot him a look. "Do you know why those of the righteous faction have an easier time ascending than others?"

Tong Guiyu smiled. "Isn't it because of your upright morals? But since the Dao is natural, following the intentions of Heaven can also be considered righteous."

"Heavenly intent," said Jiang Yinghe who was raised to believe in self-sufficiency as he set down a piece on the chessboard, "is but another name for the desires of humans."

—-

Jiang Yinghe's disciples did not act out again for the rest of the conference.

Many people were thinking, never mind his disciples. If the Xianjun himself did something then there would be no point in continuing the event.

He Huan sect was a gracious host. Jiang Yinghe even stayed an extra day to discuss the Dao with Tong Guiyu. Chang Ye was a devil so he was bored

out of his mind listening to them speak which is why he waited outside in a tree while polishing his flute.

Only half of his face was beautiful. There were disgusting scabs and scars underneath the mask that hid the other half. There was a silver protection seal on his forehead made by Jiang Yinghe. As long as it remained, it would prevent his damaged meridians from rupturing.

The green flute in Chang Ye's hand seemed ordinary, if of slightly higher quality than usual. He set down a new layer of restrictions every time he brushed over it, securing it even more than Li Huanhan's blood sword.

This was the devil instrument Duanshe Li that could freely change its appearance. In the recorded legends, the Devil King Tianhou used it in the form of a longsword to seal the devil god of the time above the Endless Sky Watchtower.

Chang Ye's mind was filled with the thought of his Shizun's faint yet refreshing fragrance as he worked. He snapped back to attention when he heard voices approaching.

"Did you see Jiang Yinghe? He was the one that was playing chess with our Deputy Sect Master!"

"Who didn't see him? Only our He Huan sect is lucky enough to feast our eyes on one of the top ten legendary beauties of the cultivation world from up close hehehe..."

His movements stilled for a second. Chang Ye glanced at the two male He Huan disciples walking over.

"That cold and haughty appearance of his just makes me want to press him down and do you-know-what to him. Man, I've got to get a furnace like that in the future..."

"Pah, as if you could. I heard that when Jiang Yinghe started out a thousand years ago there were many people who wanted to sponsor him but guess what? They all fell under his sword. Some that went too far were even

killed. Heck, you would think he practised dual cultivation based on his appearance. I just don't understand how a man like that is still a virgin."

"You know how those sword practitioners can be. They're only able to dedicate so much time to training because they haven't gotten any action yet." The first man laughed derisively. "Why don't you serve a jar of Yuanying Springtime Wine to that frigid Jiang Xianjun? Who knows? You might just get it on with him."

"Isn't that too little?" His companion said, "For sword cultivators like him you need to bring out the big guns, something stronger like Seven Days of Joy..."

He was prevented from speaking further by the crisp melody of a flute.

The sound pierced through the eardrums and seemed to convey a dangerous warning to their brains. Yet the two that heard it were unable to run before they collapsed to the ground, having lost control of their muscles.

They wanted to scream but no sound came out. Just as their terror reached a tipping point, the sound of someone landing lightly on the ground was heard under the song that continued to play.

Then, leaves could be heard crunching as someone approached. All they could do was move their eyes around desperately.

The flute grew silent.

The two wanted to cry out for help until an even stronger pressure crushed their bodies into the ground, making it even more impossible to make a sound.

The person that spoke first wanted to cry so badly. He felt a foot step on his back hard enough to pulverize his tailbone. He saw the dark green outfit the other person was wearing.

He heard a light laugh.

It sounded like it came from a lively and mischievous youth.

"You guys are quite brave." There was a hint of a smile in Chang Ye's words. His expression was warm and pure, with his eyes crinkling out of joy. "Is Jiang Xianjun someone the likes of you can covet?"

The sentence was said so languidly that it didn't seem to be a question anymore. Like it was more of a joke.

The man underneath his foot convulsed in indescribable agony. The other tried with all his might to lift his head. He saw the half-masked face of Chang Ye.

An androgynous beauty stood before him. His long and dark eyelashes framed his face and made him resemble a harmless little animal.

But this angelic youth was still smiling as he removed his foot from where it was buried.

A metallic scent spread through the air as blood gushed out of the gaping wound.

The man that saw this bugged out his eyes in fright but he could not scream. All he could do was continue to listen to this deceptively delicate youth speak in his clear voice.

"Shizun's name and everything else about him. All of it belongs to me."

His lips curled up. There was an endless darkness in his eyes. "And as for you guys...well, you've dirtied me."

As he finished speaking, Chang Ye flicked the emerald flute in his hands. The bodies on the ground immediately disintegrated. Even the traces of blood evaporated, as if the two were never there to begin with.

The youth wiped down the flute one last time. He turned towards where Jiang Yinghe was having a discussion with Tong Guiyu, muttering to himself. "I promised my Shizun to not let others pollute me so I have to be a good person. I hope you guys can understand."

He put away the flute and set off in his usual lively manner to find his Shizun.

The conversation in He Huan was just wrapping up as he arrived.

Jiang Yinghe rose and performed a simple salute to Tong Guiyu. "It has been a long time since we last met, but I must be going now."

Tong Guiyu sighed. "If our path to the Dao remains smooth, a few years would pass by in the blink of an eye."

Jiang Yinghe nodded in agreement. Just as he was about to depart with the Peng Lai disciples, Protector He entered the pagoda with a strange expression. He said to Tong Guiyu, "Deputy Sect Master, two soul lamps of our disciples were extinguished just now."

The soul lamp going out meant that they had died. Tong Guiyu paused, "Were they travelling outside?"

Protector He shook his head. "No, they were inside sect territory."

Tong Guiyu frowned. He didn't suspect Jiang Yinghe or Peng Lai sect at the moment, instead opting to personally investigate. He gestured for Protector He to send off Xuan Wei Xianjun.

Since this was a private matter, Jiang Yinghe could not interfere. He had ordered Li Huanhan and Qin Jun to look after the Peng Lai disciples, so only his youngest remained by his side.

When Jiang Yinghe took Chang Ye's hand to lead him away, he suddenly heard a very small and troubled voice.

"Shizun....was this done by a demonic or ghost cultivator? Have they infiltrated the He Huan sect?"

Chang Ye's hand tightly held his sleeve. It was a habit that no amount of admonishment seemed to change.

Jiang Yinghe knew that his little disciple was easily scared and lacked a sense of security, so he replied in a softer tone. "Everything will be fine. Shizun will protect you as long as you're by his side."

Protect, huh.

This was a foreign word to him. It made his lies, his disguises and all his efforts to craft that mask to be just a tiny bit closer to the one beside him feel worth it.

If his tail could be out right now, he would definitely wrap Tianhou's thick and strong tail around the waist of the person in front of him so that he could never leave.

Chang Ye glanced at him with a hidden sparkle in his eyes. He swallowed and nodded seriously. His hand clenched Jiang Yinghe's just a little bit tighter.

"En!"

Author's Corner

Chang Ye: Shizun I'm scared qaq

System: ...Scared my ass! I can't even bear look at how blackened you are!

OceanofPDF.com

CH17 - PLUM BLOSSOM KISS (Draft)

Qing Jing Peak.

The wind was howling in the dead of night.

Several lit candles shone their dim light on Jiang Yinghe's pale sleeves that occasionally shifted in front of Li Huanhan.

"What happened?" Jiang Yinghe removed the silver hairpin holding up his hair, allowing an inky black curtain to cascade down his shoulders. He affixed a stern expression to his face and continued. "You will only make enemies by being so ruthless to others."

Li Huanhan stood before him clothed in black. His eyes were as vibrant as fresh blood and completely closed off unless they were looking at Jiang Yinghe. Only then could a trace of something resembling warmth be seen.

"Shizun." His voice was very heavy. "That person dared to say such things about you, so I..."

Just that one word alone was enough to soften Jiang Yinghe's heart.

When Li Huanhan saw his Shizun's long and narrow fingers under the candlelight, an audacious thought suddenly rose in his mind.

This pair of hands were suited for holding a sword, but they were even more suited to be pressed down on the softest bedding that the Tian Muo school had to offer. Tiredly grasping the blanket....Littered with marks from kisses...Covered inch by inch by his hands....

His eyes darkened for a second. Li Huanhan took in Jiang Yinghe's disheveled appearance but also the image of himself reflected in those warm eyes.

"How can you lose control of your rationality for me? You've always been so headstrong."

Although he said a word of reprimand in the end, Jiang Yinghe was not very angry anymore. He had browsed through the Sword Viewing Scroll in front of him many times, but he was still unable to find a suitable match.

"Was it really just an accident?" He asked, "Huanhan, do not lie to your Shizun."

Maybe it was the word 'lie' that deeply affected Li Huanhan. He frowned and did not say anything. Instead, he reached out to grasp Jiang Yinghe's hand.

The last time they had held hands was on the way to He Huan sect in the crane-led carriage. Even if Jiang Yinghe felt cold, he could feel his heart pound out a heated rhythm while touching him.

Jiang Yinghe did not understand at first until he sensed the irregular forces within his body- this was one of the side effects of the heavenly demon's physique, albeit one that hasn't appeared for several years.

"Was it because of this?" Jiang Yinghe was no longer concerned with punishing his disciple after discovering this. He tightly grasped his hand and sent a wave of spiritual energy through it.

His three disciples all had very weak constitutions. Jiang Yinghe had made his peace with this fact since he took them in. It was only after he entered Li Huanhan's nascent soul that he learned that even his meridians had become impacted.

He was unable to not shoot a sharp look at Li Huanhan, so aggrieved that his breathing quickened. "You and Jun-er have the same temperament... No, you are even more stubborn than Jun-er. You know that you can tell me

anything. Are you really going to wait until the day you fall to a qi deviation to inform me?"

Li Huanhan's blood-red eyes silently watched him. "Shizun cares greatly for Chang Ye shidi."

He couldn't hide the vinegar in his voice even if he tried. This person was able to touch the deepest, most sensitive crevices of his heart with every encounter, luring him into a beautiful dream only to cover his body with stinging wounds while he slept

There were too many layers of deceit between the demon and the immortal, the disciple and the teacher.

Li Huanhan tightly held his hand, the impurities in his body running rampant. The skin on his arm even began to split and bleed.

"Of course I care about you." Jiang Yinghe's first reaction was to retort. He felt like he had been reproached by his disciple. He fumed, "This master hasn't even asked why you insist on enduring alone, and you already feel that I am biased and have wronged you?"

Blood dripped from Li Huanhan's arm onto Jiang Yinghe's light-coloured sleeve. Dark stains soon blossomed across it.

Jiang Yinghe has gained a reputation of remaining distant from the dirty affairs of the mortal realm. Only to the disciples he has raised for so many years would he become so warm and soft-spoken.

He has sullied Shizun.

Li Huanhan stared at the traces of red on his sleeve. When he looked up again, he suddenly said, "Shizun."

"En?"

"When did you replace that tea set?"

He was referring to the emerald green set on the nearby jade table. Everything in Jiang Yinghe's residence was carefully added by him. He would be the first to know if something didn't come from his hands.

Jiang Yinghe followed the direction of his gaze. "Jun-er sent it over before."

Qin Jun...

Li Huanhan took in a deep breath and resentment flashed through his eyes. Remembering that he was in front of Jiang Yinghe, he quashed all of the violent feelings in his heart. He slowly followed his Shizun's guidance to remove the impurities in his body.

In reality this 'side effect' was harmless to Li Huanhan. His true level of cultivation would immediately become apparent as soon as he threw away his human foundation, but he did not dare to do such a thing.

How could he? The more warmth he experienced at Jiang Yinghe's side, the more he desired it. On a certain level Qin Jun and Chang Ye's suspicions about his intentions were correct. He did want to hold Jiang Yinghe in his arms and spirit him back to the Tian Muo school. Not as a furnace, but as a cultivation partner.

So he continued to endure even while he was going insane out of jealousy. He watched as a strand of Jiang Yinghe's hair fell from his thin shoulders, curving through the air in a graceful arc.

It was like it fell straight onto the deepest part of his heart.

"Why are you asking about that?" Jiang Yinghe had calmed down by the time he fixed the forces within his body. He raised his head and said, "I stored your tea set in my personal dimension. Jun-er said it was too precious and likely to be damaged by ordinary water."

...Qin Jun you son of a bitch.

Li Huanhan showed no traces of his thoughts on his face. He replied dismissively, "En."

Of course the set he gifted was precious, his Shizun deserved only the best. But the set Qin Jun brought back wasn't much better; the slightest speck of dust would ruin the entire piece. How shameless was that wraith to spout such boldfaced lies?

"Shizun," Li Huanhan retracted his gaze and began to massage his fingertips. "out of all you disciples....who is the most important to you?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't think he would be so fixated on this subject. He sighed with exasperation, "I have great expectations for all of you. You are the future of the immortal path."

Li Huanhan's eyes were gloomy. He looked at him for a long time before nodding. "The future of the immortal path..."

He has never resented his identity as a demonic cultivator more than in this moment.

Jiang Yinghe had no way to discern the other person's thoughts. He could only see the progress bar provided by the system fluctuate over the past hour before stopping at a relatively stable value.

Jiang Yinghe let out a sigh of relief. Who knew that those impurities could have such a big impact on the progression of his task? He continued to soothe his spiritual veins. After a while, he admitted, "There is actually another reason, a small but selfish wish of mine."

Candlelight illuminated his bright black eyes.

"For the sake of this wish, I want to pave a smooth path of all of you on your cultivation journey and to teach you to be morally upstanding individuals." Jiang Yinghe said, "The more all of you change for the better, the closer I will be to fulfilling it.....Huanhan, no matter how cruel the cards fate has dealt you are, you will be able to find your way home with Shizun here."

"I won't give up, so neither can you." He softly held Li Huanhan's hand. "Humans must struggle to get what they want."

Jiang Yinghe poured another cup of chicken soup for his disciples, using all he has learned in both his lifetimes to better them. His mind was filled with the responsibilities of a teacher and he was very satisfied with the guidance he provided.

Reconditioning spiritual veins was a very delicate task. All three of them needed it, and yet there was only one of him. More importantly, most of the challenges could only be overcome by themselves.

It began to rain at midnight.

Jiang Yinghe was unused to staying up. He continued to work on his task until he fell asleep,

Li Huanhan stayed by his side, silently watching him. He guarded him the entire night.

He only slowly extracted his finger from his Shizun's loose grip when the sun began to rise.

Under the sound of the rain, tender feelings were hidden away in those blood-red eyes. The legendary Xuehe Demon Lord from a thousand years ago had no experience in the matters of love, so he didn't dare to do anything else.

But when he left, he planted a fleeting kiss on the back of his hand.

It was as tender as a snowflake falling on a plum blossom.

Author's Corner

Mr. Hugo said that the first sign a man is in love is if he is afraid.

So what if he's a demon lord? Wouldn't you be scared to death if he frowns in his sleep?

OceanofPDF.com

CH18 - A DOUBLE STANDARD (Draft)

It was evident that Qin Jun was well versed in the Xingdou sword style he was assigned. It wasn't that he practiced day and night, he was just naturally gifted. Jiang Yinghe could not be more pleased after being shown once, but he had to pretend to be stern and critique his routine. Although he made some minor suggestions like stepping with firmer strides, he was in actuality as proud as a peach.

When he first came to the cultivation world everything was new and surprising to him. There was very little that could move him now a thousand years later. It was only recently that he discovered how satisfying teaching others could be.

It was a bit like playing a simulation game. The more they improved, the more accomplished he felt.

But the matter of finding a suitable sword for Chang Ye has troubled him for quite some time.

Jiang Yinghe flipped through another scroll detailing a number of weapons with nothing to show for his efforts. Chang Ye was still young, so there was a limit on how much weight he could lift. Heavy longswords were completely out of the question. If he had a choice, then a saber would be ideal.

Just as he was contemplating commissioning a custom blade for his youngest, a series of light knocks could be heard from the doors of his residence. Jiang Yinghe put down the scroll in his hands to see the sweet smile blossoming across his little disciple's face as he ran over.

"Shizun," Change Ye leaned in closer, wrapping himself around a slender arm to take a whiff of the cold fragrance that surrounded him. "I heard that Li-shixiong stayed over last night. Didn't you say that we had to sleep alone from now on? Even someone my age can do it, so how can Shixiong need Shizun to stay with him?"

Chang Ye complained in a wronged voice while peering over at Jiang Yinghe with those bright eyes. He was like a child throwing a tantrum. "If I can't sleep with Shizun then Li-Shixiong shouldn't be able to either."

This was the first time Jiang Yinghe had learned of this. He thought the other had retired soon after he fell asleep reconditioning his meridians.

"He didn't leave?"

"Yeah!" Chang Ye nodded very seriously. "My Emerald Spring courtyard is right across from Li-shixiong's Winter Storm residence. I kept watch all night!"

Jiang Yinghe was amused by his antics and knocked the top of his little disciple's head playfully. "Why did you look at that all night? There's no need to be so stingy among martial siblings. Your Shixiong was just not feeling well yesterday."

Although it was called Qing Jing Peak, it was actually more of a mountain range. The White Jade Crane residence was in the center, with caves of varying sizes surrounding it refashioned into rooms. Each one was personally named by Jiang Yinghe when he made this place his home.

Due to the fact that he kept only a few servants and his three disciples around, there were many empty rooms available on Qing Jing Peak.

Chang Ye rubbed where his head had been hit while mumbling in his childish voice. "If he didn't feel well yesterday then how's he fighting with Qin Jun at the Typhoon Cliffs right now? What a load of bull...."

Jiang Yinghe did not think to enhance his hearing so he was unable to hear what he said clearly. He asked, "What did you say?"

"Li-shixiong and Qin-shixiong went out to spar." Chang Ye replied obediently. "I trained for a while until I remembered Shizun only wants to sleep with Shixiong and forgot all about Ye-er, so I came here."

He said it as if he felt fully justified by his words, like he couldn't see anything wrong with someone his age being so attached to Jiang Yinghe.

It just so happened that Jiang Yinghe's impression of him was a green and vulnerable child he rescued from being imprisoned in ice. Being somewhat dependent on authority figures after such a traumatic event was natural.

"How can I ever forget about you?" Jiang Yinghe comforted him before questioning, "But why do I feel like I've raised you into a spoiled young miss? I must have overindulged you."

While he was reflecting on his approach to education, the young voice of a stranger rang out from outside.

"Disciple Lu Cheng greets Xianjun. I come bearing a summons from the Sect Master."

Jiang Yinghe invited him in once he heard that the sect master sent him.

A man dressed in the green robes of a disciple stepped into the room, placing a black scroll on the jade table. He saluted and said, "The Sect Master writes to inform you that this matter concerns the place that Xianjun and Yan Zhenren once went to cleanse of miasma."

Jiang Yinghe slightly inclined his head and watched as the messenger left. The pinched expression of his little disciple completely escaped his notice.

Chang Ye only reached up to weakly adjust his mask when the disciple departed the manor. Only then did the urge to defend his territory slowly fade. He couldn't help but come near Jiang Yinghe. He knew that he had overreacted just now.

He only needed to fend off those two scheming bastards, so why did he feel like his tail had been stepped on when ordinary Peng Lai disciples came

near Jiang Yinghe? Chang Ye snuck another glance at his Shizun's elegant appearance, unable to identify the emotions he felt at that moment.

He suddenly thought of the two he killed back at He Huan sect, of their crude and vulgar words. Every time Chang Ye witnessed his Shizun's honour being besmirched, he felt a strong urge to kill the one responsible.

He drew closer and let that cold fragrance calm him.

Did he develop a taste for immortal cultivation after his imprisonment?

Chang Ye was only able to draw one conclusion from his frazzled mind. He wasn't interested in Jiang Yinghe's cultivation but rather....

Chang Ye stood there unmoving. His mind was becoming consumed by an indescribable feeling. He was no longer aware of his Shizun looking over the scroll. It was only when that feeling reached a plateau that he heard Jiang Yinghe's soft and clear voice.

"Yun province was just beginning to recover, but now ghost cultivators and the undead are gathering there again. We should be cautious."

Chang Ye came back from his thoughts. He blinked and nodded. "En."

"Go back to practice some more. This time I will be taking you all... En? Why are your ears so red?"

Chang Ye quickly hid his ears in his hands. He didn't even realize how hot they were himself. Stunned, he spluttered an excuse. "Shizun's room is too warm."

Warm? Jiang Yinghe swept his gaze questioningly over his surroundings.

The White Jade Crane residence, with its jade walls, continued to stubbornly exude a pleasantly cool aura after being praised as 'warm'.

—-

The summons was not only about the situation in Yun city but also contained information on how Peng Lai and the other sects would work together to purify the miasma. This was too complex to be explained via sound array, which is why Zhou Zhengping sent a summons over.

The elders of Peng Lai were currently in the middle of an actual face-to-face meeting, which was rare for them.

The Peng Lai Sect Master Zhou Zhengping, Chang Ning Zhenren Yan Caiwei, Qing Yan Zhenren Yun Buxiu and Jiang Yinghe, who had the highest cultivation of them all, were all present.

Zhou Zhengping set down his whisk and began to explain the situation. "The Ghost Festival will undoubtedly bring harm to the civilians there. The other righteous sects are also working on this alongside us."

Yun Buxiu was a straight-forward person, so he asked right away. "What's going on with that Yun province? It's not the most polluted place on the southern continent, so why is it always troubled by ghosts?"

Zhou Zhengping had already considered this question for several days to no avail. He sighed, "I don't know, but we can't stand aside and do nothing. The monks of Lan Ruo temple might know more. You can ask Zhi Jing Chanshi the next time you see him."

His last sentence was directed at Jiang Yinghe ,who was the most steadfast of his younger martial siblings.

Jiang Yinghe nodded, "Peng Lai disciples may have the guidance of elders and the support of their companions, but they are like a flower grown in a greenhouse compared to the wanton ghost cultivators. I believe that this would be a good opportunity..."

The other three had alarm bells going off inside their heads before he even finished speaking.

"Jiang-shidi," The purple-clad Yan Caiwei nervously swallowed, "Are you saying....that you want to take your disciples along?"

Jiang Yinghe replied sincerely, "Any other willing disciples are also welcome to come and help eradicate evil from the world."

Yan Caiwei thought about those disciples of his and frowned in consternation. "It's not technically against the rules, but..."

Jiang Yinghe raised an eyebrow. He was somewhat displeased. "If Shijie has something against them then please share it with me."

Yun Buxiu from beside him wanted to say something but couldn't. He looked at Zhou Zhengping, who also couldn't. The two of them looked to Yan Caiwei.

Yan Caiwei sighed, "I was only thinking that although Chang Ye would probably be fine, if Li Huanhan and Qin Jun showed up they might be mistaken for the enemy and attacked, which would end badly for everyone."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

"Especially Qin Jun. He was corrupted by countless ghosts when he was younger and miasma continues to surround him even now. Perhaps even his nascent soul contains impurities." Yan Caiwei looked up with a sorrowful expression, "With a temperament like that....Um...."

She didn't know how to continue. Yun Buxiu helped her out with a gloomy look in his eyes.

"....If he gets provoked he'll probably kill more people than the ghosts will."

Jiang Yinghe: "....It can't be that bad."

How can the Jun-er that was sensitive enough to remind him to take care of a valuable tea set be as terrifying as they described? He was just more resourceful and opinionated than most.

Jiang Yinghe's voice lacked confidence. He saw the others all turn to stare at him for some reason. His little Yun-shidi seemed to sense that something wasn't right. He stewed on his words for a moment. "It's because your

disciples treat you differently. Those guys are...they're basically famous in Peng Lai for having double standards!"

Jiang Yinghe looked at him completely lost. "....Double standards?"

Author's Corner

Cold Jade Wall: Why'd you humiliate me by saying I was hot?! I'm the material with the highest compatibility with the crane foundation!

Chang Ye: Sssh. Please do me a favour and pretend. It was my heart that was boiling.

OceanofPDF.com

CH19 - THE KINDEST MAN (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

Of course Jiang Yinghe knew what he meant.

He recalled the disparity between the way his disciples treated him and their treatment towards others.

"Right?" Yun Buxiu sighed. "Did Shixiong choose his disciples based on their tragic backstories? Let me tell you, those who have been orphaned at a young age tend to rely on their elders. Judging by their behavior, Shixiong must have spoiled them, though I suppose it was inevitable as it was your first time taking someone in."

Yan Caiwei lightly coughed a few times in warning. Yun Buxiu hesitated, glancing at Jiang Yinghe's expression before quickly adding, "But their aptitudes are truly incredible, practically one in a million."

Jiang Yinghe remained silent for a long time before saying, "They would truly become orphans if they couldn't even rely on me."

He rose from his seat, his crane-lined sleeves sliding off the table. He straightened his collar before saluting the others and leaving the meeting room.

Yun Buxiu wanted to add something, but was silenced by a harsh tug from Yan-shijie.

Yan Caiwei only spoke when Jiang Yinghe's scent completely disappeared from the room. "Don't worry, Jiang-shidi only thinks of them as his

disciples. He definitely wouldn't harbor any wayward thoughts towards them."

Xiao Yun-shidi shook his stinging arm while looking in the direction Jiang Yinghe had left in. His mood was conflicted as he spoke. "I know, but I can't help but worry that those brats are way too close to him. They're falling over themselves to be kind and gentle in front of their Shizun, but as soon as he turns his head they show their true nature. If one day, Jiang-shixiong gets his passion root back and decides to settle down with some female cultivator, will they be able to accept it?"

Yan Caiwei and Zhou Zhengping were thinking about the same thing.

"The Lan Ruo Abbot once made the prediction that Shixiong would experience a great upset in his romantic relationships, but his passion root isn't even on him. I'm starting to think that it could be related to his disciples..."

"Enough." Zhou Zhengping gave him a look while brushing his whisk. "No matter how sticky his disciples are, what could they possibly do to their Shizun's cultivation partner? And as long as the irregularities at the Endless Sky Watchtower persist, we cannot retrieve his passion root which is acting as a keystone for the formation."

Yan Caiwei, "It was only with the help of Lan Ruo temple that year that we were able to help Jiang-shidi erase his memories of his passion root being extracted. Telling him about these baseless theories will only bring him needless pain."

She continued after a pause. "Besides, any female cultivator worth her salt should have to work hard to get with an esteemed sword cultivator like Shixiong."

Yun Buxiu had already been in a strange mood, and those words brought up memories which made his mood even stranger. "But Jiang-shixiong...seems to be more attractive to men?"

Zhou Zhengping and Yan Caiwei were wearing mirror expressions as they looked at Yun Buxiu — under the influence of a curse set by the Tian Muo school, he had confessed several times to Jiang Yinghe, only to be driven into the ground by his Shixiong time and time again.

Yun Buxiu, "....That's not what I meant."

Yan Caiwei looked at him with understanding. "No need to continue. Zhangmen-shixiong, let's keep a close eye on him."

Zhou Zhengping, "Of course."

Yun Buxiu: ....WTF guys???

—-

The air in Yun City was heavily laden with resentful energy. It was even worse than it was a century ago.

The Peng Lai disciples were too stunned by the sight of countless migrating ghosts to take another step forward. They had not expected to be so seriously outnumbered, as the appearance of even one ghost cultivator could be considered unusual.

The true exorcisms were left to the seniors and elders, as the younger disciples barely managed to prevent themselves from being consumed in the onslaught. There were quite a number of righteous cultivators including a few Zhenrens and even a Xianjun from Peng Lai, so the upcoming battle didn't seem hopeless.

Only those of Jiang Yinghe's level were aware of the true danger of this place. Yun City was in complete chaos, and resentful energy was spreading at an alarming rate in all directions.

But why was this happening? Jiang Yinghe withdrew Wangchen and glanced at the young-looking monk in white robes beside him. "Hui Jing Chanshi?"

The blade of his ice sword was near absolute zero. A cold light enveloped and purified all the miasma that came into contact with it.

Hui Jing Chanshi was the younger martial brother of the abbot of Lan Ruo temple. He was already at the Primordial God level and was quite well-known as a karmic monk cultivator. He wore only white and was still youthful. A red buddhist letter adorned his forehead.

"This little monk is unable to perceive the karmic relationships of this place."

Jiang Yinghe frowned slightly. "Then this place must be...."

He was interrupted by the sudden eruption of resentful energy from within the crowd of Peng Lai disciples, more intense than any that came before.

Fortunately, no disciples seemed to be caught in it. Cultivators with less experience scrambled to get away, leaving only two figures behind.

Li Huanhan stood at attention with a hand resting on the hilt of his sword. Beside him, Chang Ye yawned and looked on with amusement as miasma surrounded someone.

In a split second, all the ghosts that they had managed to pacify went mad. Clouds began to gather as a streak of purple lightning reared its ugly head.

"....A nascent soul tribulation?" Hui Jing Chanshi said, dumbfounded. "But why is resentful energy gathering? ...Ah! Jiang Xianjun?!"

He could only watch as Jiang Yinghe headed straight for the densest part of the fog where the heavenly lightning was aiming. The snow white sleeves passing before his eyes strongly contrasted the dark environment it was set against.

He resembled a hazy beam of sunlight unhesitatingly shining into an endless darkness resembling hell.

The little monk beside him pulled on his sleeve and said, "Shifu, the one undergoing this tribulation seems to be Xuan Wei Xianjun's second

disciple."

Hui Jing Tanshi muttered a prayer under his breath. He then looked around him. "The world deemed him to be a cold man."

The little monk tilted his head in confusion.

"Helping the mortals, treasuring his disciples. Following the righteous path even in the most difficult of times. The kindness of this man is truly unmatched under the heavens."

His words were light and soon carried away by the wind. Only the seemingly unending storm of resentful energy surrounding Qin Jun remained.

Li Huanhan and Chang Ye remained apathetic to the wraith's plight until they saw Jiang Yinghe dive in.

...Did Shizun think for some reason that that bastard Qin Jun relapsed because he came here again and needed his help?!

Their cultivation was around the same level as Qin Jun. The wraith never hid his strength against them so they were able to clearly see this. But Jiang Yinghe had been deceived by him this whole time...

Li Huanhan tightened his grip on his sword. He stared unblinkingly at the center of the swirling vortex of miasma and was about to head in when he was stopped by Chang Ye.

"Are you going to tell Shizun?" His little half-masked shidi used a special sound technique to speak directly into his ear with a serious look on his face. "Li-shixiong, you're a demonic cultivator. If you go into that kind of place, the demonic aura on your body will also...."

Li Huanhan shot him a cold look. "The same logic applies to you."

"I just don't want to get caught in the crossfire when you two expose yourselves." The darkness in Chang Ye's eyes faded, and he smiled sweetly. "I plan on staying by Shizun's side for a long time to come."

—-

Qin Jun's situation could be described as 'relapsing'.

Being a wraith, this dense source of resentful energy was like a multivitamin to him. The only issue was that he took in too much at once and triggered his tribulation. He and Li Huanhan had already reached the Primordial God stage in their past life, so it was only a matter of time.

But as they advance their cultivation, the immortal foundation that serves as their disguise would be stretched thin. Shizun was completely surrounded by an aura of righteousness. He didn't want to be distant from him. Even the slightest inch was unbearable.

The surrounding resentful energy continued to pour into his body, and the right hand he held his sword with that he had hid for so long began to warp. Skin and flesh peeled off to reveal the bones underneath.

This was natural in ghost cultivation. His true form 3000 years ago was like this. As the flesh began to slowly dissolve, a portion of his true strength was unsealed.

He never expected Jiang Yinghe to charge over to the center of the miasma storm.

The air around Shizun was noticeably cooler. When he came over, it was just like how he pulled him out of his cocoon-wrapped coma a few centuries ago.

Jiang Yinghe didn't notice his hand at first and immediately set up a formation to protect his heart and core. He ordered, "Circulate your energy and endure."

"Shizun..."

"Be good. Circulate and endure." Jiang Yinghe looked away. A tremor could be heard in his usually calm voice. "Shizun is here for you."

Qin Jun was stunned.

There was a note of self-reproach in Jiang Yinghe's voice.

"I shouldn't have let you come..." This voice was soft, but it seemed to pierce deep into the wraith's heart, drawing blood. "It was careless of me."

Qin Jun could see the worry in the line of his brows. It took a herculean effort to not kiss him then and there.

Why did he want to kiss him instead of eating him?

Qin Jun didn't know and he didn't care to find out.

All he knew right now was how much he wanted to bring Shizun back to the territory of the ghost cultivators, and stain this distant sword cultivator with the dust of mortal affairs.

The hand that was only bones held his Shizun's sleeve as if it was a sparkling, delicate snowflake.

No matter how cold or how difficult it was from now on, he would never let go again.

Author's Corner

"Although they say that good and evil are divided, I would still never let go of your hand." — lyrics from 'Imaginary Dark Immortal'

Wow I just found a new song to add to my playlists. Zhang Bichen is such a good singer. You can listen to her song on Youtube.

Everyone please give a warm welcome to the new editor for this novel, chestnutwhale!

OceanofPDF.com

CH20 - GET OUT OF MY WAY (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

The miasma surrounding him riddled his mortal vessel with holes.

Qin Jun's eyes were steel-gray and gave off an arrogant air when looking at others. Yet they stared into Jiang Yinghe's as if he was a priceless treasure.

Jiang Yinghe was busy protecting his heart and nascent soul. His ears were filled with the sound of rumbling thunder from above. He lamented, "If I had managed to remove all the resentful energy from your body before, this would have never happened....."

His words halted as he caught sight of Jun-er's hand.

All that was left of a strong and proportionate limb was stark white bone and the tattered remains of a few tendons. The originally dark sleeve had been stained through with bits of flesh and gave off the distinctive scent of blood.

Jiang Yinghe was at a loss for words.

He suddenly reached over to touch a bony finger.

By now, the dark clouds had completely covered the sky. A fearsome bolt of heavenly lightning struck the dead center of the miasma.

Normally, cultivators would stay away from those experiencing a tribulation for two reasons.

Jiang Yinghe was of the Hollowed Cave stage. It was not difficult for him to face a Nascent Soul level tribulation, but it was not pleasant either.

"Your hand...."

Jiang Yinghe cut himself off. He held Jun-er's finger tightly. "....Shizun will think of a way."

His voice was very quiet and suffused with a warmth that no one else was privy to. Qin Jun was a bloodless, fleshless wraith that didn't need a heartbeat to survive. But at this moment he could feel the human heart in his chest pound violently.

He suddenly drew Jiang Yinghe into his arms.

"Shizun," His voice was somewhat hoarse like it had been rubbed raw by sandpaper. "if I really become a monster....would Shizun leave me behind?"

It was rare to hear him speaking in such a manner.

Steeling his eyebrows, Jiang Yinghe looked at him with a promise in his dark eyes. "Shizun won't let you get there."

The miasma continued to expand, shaking as the heavenly lightning rained down. Qin Jun looked down without reacting in the slightest to being struck repeatedly. His gaze was focused on their intertwined hands.

His mind was filled with countless evil thoughts clamouring and interfering with his rationality. Shizun holding his hand made him want to steal him and hide him away where no one else could see him.

But he couldn't do that.

Never has he realized it as clearly as in this moment: what he wanted was the Jiang Yinghe before him right now.

He never wanted to see the day Wangchen was pointed at him.

How was Jiang Yinghe to know what Jun-er was thinking about? He was busy reminiscing about Qin Jun's cultivation journey over the past century and thinking of ways to help him....Although this hand was usable, it couldn't be left like this! It might scare off Jun-er's future cultivation partner!

Jiang Yinghe felt like he was an old man with three good-for-nothing sons. Although their cultivation progress was good, he couldn't help but worry about how to find them a wife to settle down with.

The transition from Nascent Soul to Primordial God was not easy. Those who survive it could be respectfully referred to as Zhenrens. Who didn't spend hundreds of years preparing a suitable location and time to invoke it? But his poor Jun-er....

Jiang Yinghe continued to protect his heart. "I know it's sudden, Jun-er, but you have to endure..."

Qin Jun lowered his head and embraced him then, as if he couldn't bear it anymore.

Jiang Yinghe sighed. "Even I can't help you with this. All I can do is preserve your life. There's no use in getting closer to me."

"There is." Jun-er's voice was hoarse as if he was parched. "Shizun, let me hold you a little while longer."

He tightened his arms around Jiang Yinghe's back, realising for the first time how narrow his waist was.

Jiang Yinghe usually wore many layers, giving him the look of an ethereal immortal, but it also obscured his figure. It was only when he was held that one could feel the very human warmth of his body.

He was too light. Qin Jun could barely feel his weight on his palm, as if the other could easily escape his grasp.

He couldn't help but tighten his grip as this realization. He heard Shizun say in an exasperated voice, "Does doing this give you the strength to overcome your tribulation?"

Jiang Yinghe meant for his words to be an encouragement for his disciple to courageously face his tribulation. Everyone experienced a few very low points in their lives....take him for an example. The worst thing that could happen was failing to advance, there wasn't any risk of damaging his foundation.

He didn't think that this usually independent and proud second disciple of his would bury his head so intimately in his shoulder, saying in a serious tone, "It does."

Jiang Yinghe: "....."

He can't teach this kid anymore.

Just as Jiang Yinghe was having a mental breakdown, he saw that the Little Jiang Shizun System's progress bar suddenly leap forward. It even made pink bubbles appear on screen and sent him a heart emoji.

Jiang Yinghe: .WTF was this bullshit.

—-

The storm raged on.

This kind of tribulation came as a huge shock to everyone. Even the migrating ghosts went mad.

A cloud of inky black miasma obscured the center where lightning struck. There was no way to tell what was going on inside. The only certain things was the lightning that rained down relentlessly and the increasingly rampant resentful energy.

Li Huanhan stood to one side with a freezing aura around him. No one dared to approach him. Some of the Peng Lai disciples saw the scene of Xian Wei Xianjun diving into the ghostly whirlpool after Qin-shixiong.

Even the usually harmless-looking Chang Ye shidi had a hint of stiffness hidden in his smile.

Although Chang Ye now had a sword, it wasn't a famous one from the Sword Viewing Scroll. Instead, it was a saber from Jiang Yinghe's personal collection. Jiang Yinghe had picked it out reluctantly, his heart still set on commissioning a custom blade for his little disciple.

Chang Ye loved it like it was a priceless treasure, never letting it leave his side wherever he went. Yet the weapon he was unconsciously touching at this moment was not the saber, but instead the emerald flute tied to his waist.

Chang Ye slowly tapped the bottom of his mask, the protective seal on his forehead flashing every once in a while. He felt an itch in his molars. In his head he's already tore this Qin-shixiong of his to pieces several times.

Tianhou's habits were very unique. He didn't like to eat anything other than dragon brain, the complete opposite of that glutton Qin Jun.

Chang Ye had already caught on to how Qin Jun was seducing Jiang Yinghe. He suddenly saw the previously still Li Huanhan pull out his sword, his bloodlust flowing freely around him.

He quickly intercepted the heavenly demon. "Shixiong!"

That wasn't something you heard everyday.

Li Huanhan glared at him. His voice was without a single trace of warmth. "Get out of my way. I'm going to turn that son of a bitch into dog food."

The lighting chose that moment to stop. The clouds and fog slowly dispersed.

Chang Ye had no more interest in stopping him. He turned around and was about to try and embrace Shizun when he saw Qin Jun's hand reluctantly remove itself from Jiang Yinghe's waist.

Chang Ye had a change of heart. "...I'll help out. Let's go."

But no matter how tempting it was, they couldn't risk exposing themselves in front of that person. They had no choice but to endure.

Half of Qin Jun's shirt was already soaked in blood from his wounds inflicted by the lightning. Yet he kept staring at Jiang Yinghe's cheek as if he hadn't noticed it at all.

Maybe the gaze was too intense. His Shizun who was still helping him stabilize his foundation glanced at him. Qin Jun immediately looked away to the two standing nearby.

Li Huanhan slowly slid his blood sword back into its sheath and dully said, "Congratulations Shidi."

Chang Ye pinched his fingers from beside him as if trying to suppress his urge to hurt someone. He managed a weak smile. "Who would have thought that Qin-shixiong would experience his tribulation in the Yun ghost city? This place is terrifying, what with the ghosts everywhere...

"Oh right, Shizun doesn't know yet, right? Hui Jing Chanshi was just speaking with the other elders. He said that the recurring bouts of miasma here could be due to a problem from the past."

Jiang Yinghe split his attention to listen. "What problem?"

"Apparently a powerful ghost cultivator was struck down here. It was likely to be that Spirit Patriarch from 3000 years ago. What was his name...?" Chang Ye put on a pensive front. "I think the historical records referred to him as Bing Zhi."

He smiled sweetly. "Oh wait, isn't Qin-shixiong's courtesy name Bing Zhi?"

This 'kind and obedient' little shidi's mouth was way too smooth, Qin Jun had no time to react before he started exposing all his secrets.

Qin Jun tried to salvage the situation. "How can I be similar to a ghost cultivator?"

Chang Ye snorted. "Yeah, there's a big difference between you guys."

The only reason they didn't start arguing was out of consideration for Jiang Yinghe. It was only after he retracted his hand after making sure that his disciple's realm had stabilized that he noticed they had an audience.

His Yan-shijie came over right away after seeing the lightning, but she'd been unable to find Jiang Yinghe up until now. She breathed a sigh of relief upon seeing that he was unharmed. "What happened? There was a Primordial God tribulation going on and I couldn't approach. Is Shidi hurt?"

Jiang Yinghe silently shook his head and took up Qin Jun's hand in his own. Slender white fingers tightly grasped cold bones. "Only Jun-er was hurt."

Yan Caiwei nodded. "What's important is that the person is fine. Injuries can be dealt with later."

Hui Jing Chanshi approached from the side and offered, "Jiang Xianjun. If you are not too busy, why not accompany this monk to stay a while at Lan Ruo Temple? There may be some way to heal this wound."

Jiang Yinghe was just about to reply that he could only make a decision after dealing with the ghost cultivators when he saw all of them run away as if they were being chased by the hounds of hell. Instantaneously, the majority left the mortal realm. The few left behind trembled in fear as the younger generation ganged up on them.

What just happened? Did their daughter-in-law go into labour or something?

Jiang Yinghe swallowed back his words. "...I would be more than happy to go."

Author's Corner

Chang Ye: I might not be a human, but you're really a dog.

Qin Jun aka Bing Zhi. 'Bing Jun' is a metaphor for government power from Wei Yuan's book 'Under the Goblet, Part 8'. Jun is a good character suitable for boys~

OceanofPDF.com

CH21 - AN UNDERGROUND ROMANCE (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

The task of wrapping up the siege of Yun city was given to Yan Caiwei and the Fang Lu Zhenren Zhen Hanliu from the Yingzhou sect. Two Primordial God level Zhenren were more than enough to take care of the remnants.

After informing his Zhangmen-shixiong via messenger array, Jiang Yinghe accompanied Hui Jing Canshi back to Lan Ruo Temple.

Lan Ruo temple was the number one religious site for buddhists to gather, as it was situated in a spiritually pure location. The abbot of this monastery was called Chan Qing and despite his appearance, he could easily be considered Jiang Yinghe's senior. His cultivation was said to be even higher than that of Jiang Yinghe, but he was currently in the midst of a test of mentality and could not easily leave the temple.

After the Hollowed Cave stage, there were three tribulations and five tests of mentality to pass before becoming a Half-step Golden Immortal. The most recent person to achieve this level was the Xuehe Demon Lord from a thousand years ago. Due to his influence, the demonic cultivators were able to run rampant, as the righteous sects had no way to deal with their leader.

But evil always gets its comeuppance. The fall of the Xuehe Demon Lord allowed the righteous faction to catch their breath.

Upon close examination, all the evil cultivators that manage to reach the Half-step Golden Immortal stage seem to have been struck down by heavenly lightning. Whether it was just a coincidence or something more

was unknown. On the other hand, the legendary Dao Sage came from the slower path of buddhist cultivation.

It was said that the world was first created by this Dao Sage. Although it was just a legend, Jiang Yinghe felt a bit of hope.

After all, the only other method he had to go home besides raising his disciples was to raise his cultivation to this 'mythical' level to ascend beyond the boundaries of this world and return to Earth.

It seemed too far-fetched. Jiang Yinghe sighed lightly as he glanced at the task progression display. He had more hope in this method.

Before he could put more thought into figuring out what was influencing the progress bar, Hui Jing Chanshi stopped at the entrance of the Lan Ruo temple prayer room. He announced, "Xuan Wei Xianjun has come to visit."

The wooden doors before them opened in sync to reveal the scene within.

Jiang Yinghe had never personally seen the abbot, but he had been aware of this person's reputation for a long time. When they finally met now, he sucked in a quick breath of the sandalwood incense burning here. This guy still had hair!

He felt slightly disoriented looking at both the long white hair and the pure white monk outfit of the abbot. He also happened to be wearing a completely white outfit. He stepped into the dark room illuminated only by candlelight and took a seat across from the other.

The only hint of colour to Chan Qing was the buddhist letter situated between his brows.

Since Chan Qing was his senior in both age and cultivation level, Jiang Yinghe made the appropriate salutations before engaging this senior in conversation.

He briefly went over the situation in Yun city, Qin Jun's past and the events that occurred during the tribulation.

The incense sticks were not even burned halfway by the time he finished. The longer he listened, the stranger Chang Qing felt. Glancing outside, he asked, "Have all three of Jiang Xianjun's disciples accompanied him here?"

Jiang Yinghe: "Yes."

Chan Qing nodded as if he had expected this. He muttered a buddhist prayer before continuing, "And you plan to take them to visit the mortal realm in the coming days?"

Jiang Yinghe replied, "It could be beneficial for them to experience something new."

Chan Qing was momentarily silent. He suddenly said, "This old one would like to look into the karmic fate of Jiang Xianjun and your three disciples. Will you indulge my flight of fancy?"

The Lan Ruo Abbot has long been confined to the temple for his test of mentality. To have one's future foretold by a karmic monk cultivator was a rare opportunity. Jiang Yinghe had no reason to refuse.

The scent of incense grew more intense. Chan Qing's voice rose with it.

"There is a tangled string of fate stretching across a long time on Jiang Xianjun's body. It is too complex to examine further."

"The first disciple.....En? It's very hazy. Romantic relationships will be difficult for him, and there are signs that he will not obtain the one he desires. Xianjun's second disciple is quick to follow his heart due to being surrounded by miasma, which will lead to his downfall. This little disciple of yours.....seems to wear many masks."

Chan Jing seemed to be surprised at how muddled these predictions were. He stopped abruptly to comment, "Their souls are all too light."

"Light?" Jiang Yinghe asked, "These three children have not led an easy life, and I fear that their future will not be smooth sailing either. As for their souls...."

The Lan Ruo Abbot across from him suddenly clenched the string of beads in his hands tightly and leaned to the side, spitting out a mouthful of blood.

Jiang Yinghe hurried to support his arm, asking with concern, "Abbot Chan Qing?"

He seemed fine before, so why'd he spit out blood now? ....Wait. Since Chan Qing was still undergoing his test of mentality, did he trigger something with his words?

Just as Jiang Yinghe grew more and more confused, Chan Qing suddenly brushed off his hand. His previous good mood had disappeared and he stiffly turned away, saying, "This one would love to help but there is nothing I can do. Jiang Xianjun should seek the assistance of another for his disciple."

Chan Qing glanced at the confused Jiang Yinghe before wiping the corner of his mouth. He struggled with his words for quite some time before muttering a buddhist prayer. He sighed helplessly.

.....No one would be able understand the nonsensical fortunes he had foretold.

Jiang Yinghe was still unclear about what just happened.

He remembered the strange expression on Abbot Chan Qing's face as they bid their farewells. He seemed to want to say something to him. But he couldn't think of anything that the abbot could have been hiding from him.

Was it that his sense of compassion forbade him from sharing how hard the lives of his disciples will be?

Jiang Yinghe couldn't make heads nor tails of it. Although he was supposed to be taking his disciples on a journey through the mortal realm, the majority of his thoughts were occupied along the way back. In the end, that was all he could come up with.

Sword cultivators were not skilled in the art of deduction. Besides, he was a staunch materialist turned cultivator. This was the first time he considered a concept like karma.

"An unfulfilled desire....quick to following his heart, leading to his downfall...." Jiang Ying tapped absentmindedly on his whisk that had a jade handle when he came to a sudden realization. "Why does it all seem to be caused by relationship problems?"

Jiang Yinghe felt his mind go blank as he stumbled across what seemed like the answer. Although the last time he was with a woman was when he came out of his mother, this didn't mean he was completely oblivious about the matter. He immediately swept open the curtain of the horse-drawn carriage to speak with the driving Qin Jun. "Jun-er, come in."

They were currently travelling with a group of merchants passing by Yun city. The carriage that used to be pulled by cranes was now following the merchants' caravans without anyone being the wiser.

This journey was not to improve his disciples' cultivation but instead their minds. The higher one cultivated, the more they understood how ordinary they were in the grand scheme of things.

Qin Jun's hand could not be salvaged, so he was wearing a pitch black cloak to hide it. He had only been using one hand to drive the carriage, acting as if his right hand didn't exist. He turned to enter the carriage where his gray eyes were filled with the image of Jiang Yinghe.

"I came." Unintentionally, Qin Jun's mind saw another way to interpret their conversation. He licked his lips. "Shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe cut straight to the point. "Jun-er, is there someone you like in our sect?"

The question was calmly stated, but it was like a bomb dropped on Qin Jun's head. There came a day where the illustrious Spirit Patriarch could be rendered speechless by a single sentence.

He almost thought that he had been too overt and Jiang Yinghe had discovered his intentions. He even suspected that Chang Ye was the one who exposed him. Neither his Shixiong or Shidi were anything good.

Qin Jun focused on Jiang Yinghe's eyes but he could not detect a single trace of emotion in them. He moved closer as he felt his ice-cold body warm with a fire burning in his heart.

His intention to kidnap him rose once again in his mind. The bone hand hidden under his cloak held onto the other end of the whisk in between Jiang Yinghe's fingers. His voice was hoarse. "You.....found out everything?"

Even Qin Jun himself did not realize how much danger he was in right now.

Jiang Yinghe was just casually asking, he didn't expect to actually receive a response. He blinked and couldn't think of a single female cultivator from the sect that could be in a relationship with Jun-er. Then who was Chan Qing referring to.....?

"Who is it?" Jiang Yinghe's expression became serious as he reached over to pull on a bony finger. "I will give her five hundred thousand.....No, an entire carriage of artifacts if she leaves my disciple."

".....You don't know who they are?"

Jiang Yinghe recoiled in shock. He thought that the other was hurt that he did not pay enough attention to know who he interacted with. "It's not that Shizun is against you getting a cultivation partner, it's just that you recently advanced to the Primordial God stage and your foundation is still unstable. Romantic relationships are tricky. Why don't you reconsider once you stabilize?"

Qin Jun stared at him with a complicated expression. He withdrew his finger to instead encircle Jiang Yinghe's in his hand. He murmured in consideration. "How would Shizun know if they were since you've never had a cultivation partner?"

Jiang Yinghe did not expect Jun-er's retort. He felt that his self-esteem as a single dog had been plundered. He frowned, "Let me meet this young lady when we return to the sect. I know that people your age tend to jump into things like this, so we should discuss the long-term...."

He suddenly felt that Qin Jun was too close to him. He could feel his slow and steady breath brush softly against his collar.

Jiang Yinghe leaned back reflexively, as Jun-er lift a hand to straighten his slightly askew lapels.

....He had been too used to using spiritual techniques these past few days, and as a result, he'd become lazy when it came to his attire.

Jiang Yinghe had on a light green top with white plum blossoms embroidered onto the collar. As Qin Jun's finger slowly traced them, he smelled that alluring cold fragrance from Shizun's body. It was like he was in a snow covered bamboo forest.

"Discussing the future, huh." Qin Jun repeated his words in a low voice. "I'll tell Shizun who that person is when the time is right, okay?"

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment. "....Are you guys interested in an underground relationship?"

Qin Jun's mind went over the foreign phrase 'underground relationship' with curiosity. He asked tentatively,"Is it a relationship with someone underground?"

Someone underground as in dead people or ghost cultivators? Jiang Yinghe tiredly rubbed his eyebrows. This was the first time he felt the impact of being in another world. "It means hiding it from me."

Qin Jun stared at him some more. He then replied, "I won't hide it from Shizun."

"Really?"

"En." said Qin Jun. "After I.....confess, I hope Shizun will acknowledge our relationship."

Jiang Yinghe felt a weight being lifted from his chest. If his disciple had yet to confess, it should be something recent. Perhaps it's not too late to avoid his 'downfall'.

He nodded. "If both parties would benefit from becoming cultivation partners, I would naturally..."

The curtain of the carriage suddenly opened again as Chang Ye peeked his head in. His gaze quickly swept through the interior as he chattered incessantly. "Shizun, why'd your carriage stop? The merchants are already far ahead of us and Li-shixiong is waiting at the hotel. Hey, what are you guys talking about? What's all this about cultivation partners and acknowledging them?"

He wore a half mask and the seal on his forehead glittered. His eyes were lively and struck a delicate balance between purity and sensuality. His voice was cute and soft. "Shizun, is it something you can't tell me? Are you and Li-shixiong keeping little secrets?"

His little disciple was too skilled at acting spoiled. It was like he was a max level automatic attention seeker, even able to say words like that with an innocent face.

How long has he been listening in?! Qin Jun narrowed his eyes and smirked. "Yup, it's got nothing to do with you."

Chang Ye seemed to be shocked by his refusal. He practically flew into Jiang Yinghe's arms. "Is it about what happened in Yun city? I heard that Spirit Patriarch's sword was silver and gray just like Qin-shixiong's...."

Qin Jun: "....."

Chang Ye tugged his Shizun's sleeve as he continued to blabber. "Qin-shixiong was hurt because of those ghost cultivators! Shizun, we have to closely examine his hand..."

Qin Jun: ".....Shut up."

Jiang Yinghe realised the atmosphere in the carriage wasn't right. Thinking that Chang Ye's words had struck one of Qin Jun's sore spots, he was about to act as a mediator when the little disciple in his lap said with an obstinate expression, "Shizun, let Shixong drive. It's going to be dark soon."

Jiang Yinghe: ".....En, okay."

He glanced at the sky, then back down at the seemingly sincere little disciple in his lap. Why did he feel like he missed something important....

Author's Corner

Lies on top of lies. Hmph, you'll make Shizun dislike you if you keep this up.

OceanofPDF.com

CH22 - SHIZUN, DON'T MOVE (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

At dusk, the merchants stopped by a hotel. The lively street provided insight to local life, with people walking to and fro, hurrying to their next task.

In his room, Jiang Yinghe rifled through his personal dimension again, in search of something that might help Jun-er. He was still unable to find anything.

The rooms had been arranged by Huanhan. He did not hide his blood-red eyes, attracted the interest of the receptionist and the bellhop. But his cold demeanor kept them at a distance.

Trying to relax, Jiang Yinghe flipped half-heartedly through a book he'd bought in the mortal realm. He'd opened it on a whim, but his interest was piqued after discovering that it had illustrations.

The gentle moonlight slipped through the window as the candlelight softly flickered.

There was a knock at the door.

Jiang Yinghe didn't look up as he flipped a page. "Huanhan?"

Walking in, the other made a sound of acknowledgement. He stoked the fire, then closed half the window.

The night wind was slightly chilly, but it did not pose a problem to cultivators. Jiang Yinghe reluctantly looked up from his storybook to see Li

Huanhan pouring him a cup of tea.

The clear sound of pouring water sounded, a layer of foam forming in the cup. Li Huanhan's brows knitted and his movement slowed. "Using ordinary water to brew the Blessed Jade Dew is a waste of tea leaves."

Jiang Yinghe didn't mind and took the cup from his hands with practised motions. He took a sip. "We have no shortage of it."

Li Huanhan didn't refute his words and just gazed quietly at him. He hesitated but asked, "What did Shizun and Qin-shidi talk about on the way here?"

His question reminded Jiang Yinghe of the load of bull he'd heard about his first disciple not being able to 'obtain the one he desired'. In Jiang Yinghe's eyes, no one could possibly reject a person as gentle and considerate as his Huanhan. That phrase was more likely to apply to the other party.

The cup was placed on the table. Jiang Yinghe looked at him and replied, "I asked him if there were any women he was interested in."

Li Huanhan startled slightly as Jiang Yinghe continued.

"I don't have to tell you what your Shidi is like. What about you?" Jiang Yinghe couldn't help but sigh. "A few days ago at Lan Ruo temple, while telling your fortunes, Abbot Chan Qing mentioned that all three of you would face romantic struggles."

He stiffened his expression after saying so much. "Huaihan, are you also secretly in love? Even rabbits know better than to eat the grass beside their burrows, but all of you insist on looking for someone in the sect."

Jiang Yinghe was just thinking that his words had been too harsh when Huanhan spoke up in a voice filled with warmth.

"I do have someone I admire."

...He actually admitted it. Am I too nice? They're not even struggling anymore....

Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath and drank some tea to moisten his throat. He hadn't finished when the other continued.

"It's not a woman."

!

That mouthful of tea went down the wrong hole. Jiang Yinghe was sent into a coughing fit by that shocking revelation. His mind was in complete chaos.

The progress bar on the top right actually moved forward a bit and dinged like a notification! It even turned pink! WTF System do you want me to micromanage the love life of my disciples?!

After he managed to recover, he looked at Li Huanhan with complicated eyes. The other person remained stoic while wiping the spilled tea from his hands.

No wonder he couldn't get the one he desired. You can't change if someone is straight or bent. Jiang Yinghe sighed deeply while looking at him. "If you can't pursue them then it might be better to give up."

A loving and caring father like him actually encountered the storm that was his second disciple having an underground romance and his first disciple being bent. Life truly is a series of highs and low low low lows.

Li Huanhan did not reply at first, content to carefully dry his fingers.

His hand was as white as frost and proportionate as well. The wrist was delicate and the fingertips shapely. Illuminated in the intersection between moonlight and candlelight, it gave off a feeling not unlike jade.

Li Huanhan used the white handkerchief in his hand to slowly wipe the residual tea from the back of Jiang Yinghe's hands.

It was quite a while before Jiang Yinghe heard his first disciple speak.

"I can't give up," He said, "because he's the only one for me."

Li Huanhan raised his head to glance at him with those blood-red eyes. His hand was still held in his.

The emotion in his eyes was hard to describe. Even if Jiang Yinghe didn't have any experience, he could guess that his eldest disciple was truly in love. He had never seen the other like this before.

Although Huanhan has always been kind and considerate, he was rarely as fragile as he was now– as if even a gentle wind could carry away his words.

Jiang Yinghe had lost count of how many times he sighed. He withdrew his hand and looked out the half closed window at the crowds below. The scent of worldly affairs seemed to drift about.

But the place he was seated was silent, touched only by the moonlight and the other's close breath.

"This road will not be an easy one to walk." Jiang Yinghe said. "Think it through. Relationships can be very difficult."

Li Huanhan stared at his profile, watching as the wind teased his ink black hair, blowing it past his ear.

"This disciple has already given it sufficient thought." His voice was barely a whisper. "I am not afraid of being in a relationship. My only fear is that he will be unable to accept my feelings and distances himself from me."

Jiang Yinghe's heart hurt just listening to him. He glanced at the brothel not far across the street from their hotel. He considered taking his disciples there to broaden their worldview. They'd been raised in the secluded environment of Qing Jing peak, so they were all too eager to give their heart away.

As Jiang Yinghe's thoughts veered further off track, the bright moon in the sky was obscured by dark clouds. The once bustling and peaceful 'Zhanyu Building' was suddenly surrounded by a dark red energy. The faint scent of blood permeated the air.

It was demonic energy.

Jiang Yinghe stood abruptly and said as he strode away, "I'll go take a look, you guys stay here."

"Shizun." Li Huanhan said, "We should all go instead of relying on our elders. Also....."

He paused and glanced over Jiang Yinghe's body. ".....Would cultivators go to a brothel?"

Jiang Yinghe looked down to see his light green robes that would be too eye-catching. Huanhan was right.

He hesitated before taking out a more common outfit from his personal dimension. "The demonic energy is very dense, and it's likely that we'll encounter an enemy of a high level. I may not be able to protect you during the conflict."

His wrist was then captured. He heard his disciple speak in a natural tone.

"The clothing of commoners is difficult to fasten, allow me to help."

Jiang Yinghe momentarily felt as though he was a princess who just woke up on a luxurious bed. The kind of princess that didn't even know how to dress themselves. He was just about to refuse when Li Huanhan circled his waist and tightened his belt until the outline of his waist was visible.

He could hear the strong and violent heartbeat coming out of the other's chest.

And a note of some feeling being ruthlessly repressed.

"Don't move, Shizun."

His hands buttoned up the multitude of buttons on the outer vest, brushing out the wrinkles as he worked.

The two were too close right now. Jiang Yinghe didn't realise how tall his disciple had become.

The disciple he raised already knew how to love and when to retreat. There was an endless kindness in his heart.

Author's Corner

That endless kindness is only for you.

Once he gives his heart out, only death will be able to stop him.

...Author please don't scare me. Whose death are you talking about. Also Li Huanhan is so mature! Look at how well he takes care of his Shizun! The perfect husband~

OceanofPDF.com

CH23 - I CAN STILL PROTECT YOU (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

Jiang Yinghe originally planned only to take Huanhan along to resolve this matter as he already knew about it.

He obviously underestimated the observational abilities of his other two disciples.

This hotel was across the street from that brothel, so women with curvaceous bodies and ruby red lips were a common sight. But there were no beautiful ladies in a wide radius centered on Jiang Yinghe.

He silently took a sip of his tea and glanced at Chang Ye who sat beside him–

The youthful youngest disciple had an outstanding appearance. Although half his face was hidden, it only served to give him a mysterious aura. The half that was visible was white and delicate and graceful beyond compare. He could not even be mentioned in the same breath as the ladies who had caked on a ridiculous amount of makeup.

Jiang Yinghe's standards of beauty had been completely rebuilt by these guys. He realized why no one was approaching when he saw the light smile on his little disciples face as he served him tea.

Chang Ye was simply too attractive. Far away from their table, a group of girls previously considered to be the best-looking in this establishment

peered over and quietly expressed their admiration. Yet not one volunteered to try and sit beside Chang Ye.

They assumed that the youth was Jiang Yinghe's pampered bed warmer. Their faces lightened with peculiar smiles as they continued whispering.

"An aloof gong with a soft shou ah, isn't this a match made in heaven? I feel like my professional pride has been hurt by a boy."

"The other two are also easy on the eyes. With four handsome faces like that at a table, who can possibly be shameless enough to go? Wouldn't it be embarrassing to lose to a man?"

"Don't even start. All the courtesans retired to their rooms after seeing them." A seventeen or eighteen year-old girl among them was cracking sunflower seeds as she said this. "I can't believe people like that still go to brothels. I'd be willing even if I had to pay them."

"Are you still dreaming after all that wine you drank? They're obviously here for the novelty. Have you ever seen someone who hasn't looked around in a brothel?" The young woman couldn't help but sigh. "They all look like true gentlemen."

Technically that wasn't true.

Chang Ye held onto Shizun's snow white sleeve while glancing at Qin Jun seated across from them. He felt like the desire in this wraith's eyes could no longer be hidden.

He sneered internally. That demon Li Huanhan actually wanted to bring Shizun alone to this place which reeked of demonic energy. Isn't this damning proof of his evil intentions? And Qin Jun was, as always, a savage of a wraith. Who knows when he'll kidnap Shizun back to his lair if left unsupervised? He needs to keep a closer eye on him.

Chang Ye continued this line of thought as he said quietly to Jiang Yinghe, "Shizun, are there good demonic cultivators out there?"

Li Huanhan's eyes twitched as he glared at his little shidi. That innocent yet alluring face came closer to Jiang Yinghe with clear eyes.

"I heard that all demonic cultivators are really scary, is that true?"

Jiang Yinghe placed a cool finger against his lips. "Shush. Be careful of alerting our target."

His finger briefly touched Chang Ye's lips, like a dragonfly skimming over water. He didn't think anything was wrong with his action.

Chang Ye was surprised. He stared at the retreating finger and couldn't help but lick his lips. He was just about to speak when Qin Jun interrupted him.

"You're being too cowardly." Qin Jun's steel-gray eyes bore into him. When someone saw him direct such a gaze at them, they felt that their end was near, and that he was about to hack them to death.

But Chang Ye wasn't intimidated. He smiled mockingly at Qin Jun before lowering his head and complaining to Jiang Yinghe. "Shizun, I don't think Qin-shixiong likes me anymore."

Before Jiang Yinghe could comfort him, he sensed another pulse of demonic energy from the center of the crowded first floor.

He stared unblinkingly at the pipa placed on a stage in the middle of the first floor. He sensed that it was a disguised demonic instrument.

For a demonic cultivator to show up in this kind of civilian establishment, he must use the energy from copulation to cultivate. He might even be someone formerly affiliated with the He Huan sect. There was only one demonic cultivator that came to mind.....an old acquaintance.

That year Jiang Yinghe came to the cultivation world as a sword practitioner. He had exceptional talent and progressed quickly as the previous Peng Lai Sect Master's last disciple. He was ranked first along with Tong Guiyu from the He Huan sect in the 'Hundred Year Ranking of

Notable Cultivators'. This acquaintance of his was a talented disciple under the same master as Tong Guiyu.

It was just that he began to practise demonic cultivation and was blacklisted by He Huan sect, becoming a figure feared by humans and demons alike.

Jiang Yinghe stared at the demonic energy emanating from the purple pipa. He never would have imagined encountering him here.

He sighed and decided not to tell his disciples about who they were facing, instead softly issuing instructions. ".....Huanhan."

Li Huanhan calmly listened. "En."

"I need you and Jun-er to maintain the dimensional array I'm about to put down. You must ensure that it holds, or else the entire city will be in danger from two Hollowed Cave cultivators exchanging blows. Chang Ye, you're still young, so don't be hasty....." He took out a black tablet from Peng Lai that served as an alarm. "If the barrier is about to break, immediately input your spiritual energy to warn the Peng Lai sect."

Chang Ye received the transmission tablet, but he sensed something was wrong. "Maybe I should go with Shizun. I....."

I can still protect you.

He had wanted to protect Jiang Yinghe from the beginning, but the words had always been stuck in his throat like knives. He thought back to what he had said to Li Huanhan at Yun city.

He wanted to stay by Shizun's side for a long time to come.

But at this moment, his deceit and lies made him no different from the other two, he couldn't even say he wanted to protect him out loud.

Jiang Yinghe cut him off. "Be good and stay here."

Jiang Yinghe rarely admonished them. The last vestiges of his gentleness and patience were all given to these disciples of his. This kind of tone was

already very strict coming from him.

Li Huanhan looked at him with a heavy gaze. "If something happens, this disciple cannot promise to focus solely on maintaining the array."

Jiang Yinghe patiently explained, "This isn't something that you can interfere with. The civilians here are more important....."

"No." Qin Jun also said, "Shizun is more important."

Jiang Yinghe refuted, ".....the civilians are even more important."

"Shizun is more important." Li Huanhan's voice was calm.

Jiang Yinghe felt his chest hurt from arguing with these disobedient children. Due to the current situation at hand, he'll have to deal with them later. He quickly set up the formation around the pipa's stage.

This kind of array was very fragile and required a continuous input of spiritual energy to operate. It was the only way to resolve this quietly. According to what Jiang Yinghe knew about that person, if his spiritual weapon was here, then so was he.

The practitioners of the He Huan sect were very skilled at weaving illusions.

Jiang Yinghe rose and descended. He quietly cast a disillusionment charm on himself and walked alone to the purple pipa, entering the separate dimension he had created.

There was a ribbon tied to the top of the pipa. The flower and word carvings were filled with the memories of the old He Huan sect. Jiang Yinghe traced a hand over the engraved words. In the next second after touching the purple pipa his surroundings changed.

An illusion like he suspected.

From the bustling brothel to the deserted night before him, demonic energy and a heavy scent of blood slowly began drifting through the air.

Jiang Yinghe looked at his 'acquaintance' seated before him.

In addition to the demonic energy, there was also a very light and obscene scent surrounding him. The corpse of a young woman rested at his feet. In the blink of an eye, it rotted to reveal the skeleton underneath.

"Xiao Xuanyu." Jiang Yinghe said lightly. "It looks like you intended to lead me here."

Xiao Xuanyu rolled his eyes and kicked the skeletal remains by his foot. As expected, he smiled at Jiang Yinghe.

"You would always waltz into even an obvious trap." He stood and began approaching Jiang Yinghe step by step, appearing to reminisce about the past.

"These mortals only live a hundred years at the most before returning to dust. They're mere ants beneath our feet, yet you've alway cherished them. Even after so many years, a threat to the lives of a few ants is enough to have you land right into my hands."

He reached out a hand to brush back the hair from Jiang Yinghe's ear, but was evaded.

Xiao Xuanyu already anticipated his reaction and deeply laughed.

"How about this. If you agree to dual cultivate with me, I won't fight you here. You should know the outcome of us exchanging blows....." He paused and slowly raised the corner of his mouth. "I just so happened to need a furnace to make a breakthrough in my cultivation."

Jiang Yinghe retreated half a step, his voice cold. "The words of a madman. This master came only to settle old debts."

He slightly shifted. The snow sword Wangchen slowly materialized in midair, showing off its snow white blade before landing in his hand.

There was no warmth to be found in Jiang Yinghe's eyes. Only an icy intent.

"Using others as furnaces, killing your fellow sect members, and harming the innocent." His voice was frigid. "Xiao Xuanyu, Wangchen has never forgotten the crimes you've committed."

Author's Corner

Xiao Xuanyu: As long as you dual cultivate with me.....

Author: Do you know how many people want to dual cultivate with him? Which hole did you crawl out of?

Xiao Xuanyu: .....???

OceanofPDF.com

CH24 - SEVEN DAYS OF JOY (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

The Wangchen sword in his hand suddenly began to shake and hum in warning.

The Hollowed Cave cultivator before him was once a junior of his, one that he had guided. His personality might not have changed, but he was now corrupted by the demonic ways. Only death awaited him.

Wangchen flashed with a warning light as Jiang Yinghe tightly gripped its hilt.

But in the other's eyes, the most captivating thing standing before him wasn't the spiritual weapon, but rather the cold and pure expression of its wielder.

He was the same as always.

An untouchable immortal, and the first crush of many.

Xiao Xuanyu swallowed and began to smile darkly. "Alright. I want to see just how much you've missed me."

In reply, a deadly sword light swept towards him.

Jiang Yinghe was wearing a snow white cloak. Its edges swayed in the wind, exposing his slender wrist as he directed a massive burst of sword energy towards his opponent, leaving him nowhere to hide.

Even at the same level, demonic cultivators would have access to more offensive firepower. The two were serious from the very first exchange of blows. Jiang Yinghe remained steady with every intention to kill.

The shock waves emanating from the conflict completely levelled the world inside the dimensional array. The demonic pipa sent lingering soundwaves out that entangled all that they touched, but Wangchen was quick to break through and head straight for the source.

The sword light barely brushed over his cheek, breaking skin and drawing first blood.

He lifted a hand to wipe away the blood. There was a smile on his face as he licked his fingertip. He suddenly said, "Xiao He, you've overprepared for this illusory realm. It doesn't have any of those obscure secondary effects, so you would be better off focusing your efforts elsewhere....."

In the desolate plain illuminated by the moonlight, Xiao Xuanyu fearlessly strode towards the projections of sword light emitted by Wangchen. The closer he got, the more uneasy Jiang Yinghe felt.

Technically speaking, an illusory realm can be used as a maze to slowly eat away at the mind of others, but Jiang Yinghe had prepared countermeasures for that.

Yet the casual attitude of his opponent created a spark of suspicion in his mind.

.....Was there some variable that he had failed to consider? Sound waves from the pipa, demonic techniques....

The answer was on the tip of his tongue. Jiang Yinghe was about to speak when his always cool body suddenly experienced a strange rush of heat.

Hisssss–

He finally remembered what he had forgotten. The faint obscene scent that emanated from the other's body.

The scent itself was a well-hidden hypnotic technique of He Huan sect.

The flow of energy in Jiang Yinghe's body weakened. Wangchen was backhandedly stabbed into the ground.

Moonlight weaved through his inky black hair to shine on his tightly wound brows.

The normally cold eyes became misted over as a result of the technique. His slender lips were moist and soft. They parted slightly to take in a deep breath.

If someone has broken the thin neck of a crane or crushed freshly fallen plum blossoms beneath the snow before, they would be able to understand the sight before Xiao Xuanyu's eyes right now.

The moon beamed down on Jiang Yinghe's snow white cloak. A faint fragrance slowly drifted out.

The breath of a stranger approached.

"Xiao He." The other person said, "You've been cultivating the path of the sword for a millenium, of course I couldn't beat you head on. But your heart hasn't changed a bit after all this time."

The breathing drew near, its voice hoarse.

"You always think too much of those around you. Too naive and too kind. I'm hardly the first willing to use unscrupulous methods to obtain you. I'm just doing what everyone wanted to do..."

"Do you know how I felt when you and Tong Guiyu tied for first in that list? .....I wanted to kill him right then and there."

He raised a hand to brush away a few errant strands of hair from Jiang Yinghe's cheek. "Are you still fighting it? This is He Huan sect's Seven Days of Joy. I used the secret recipe to whip up a batch."

He laughed as he took in Jiang Yinghe's trembling eyelashes and the furious howl of the Wangchen sword that seemed like the only thing keeping him from collapsing. He felt an overwhelming sense of satisfaction for having made a longtime dream of his into reality.

He stepped forward. When he was a hair's breadth away, he heard Jiang Yinghe's disparaging voice.

"So you know that you are unscrupulous." He opened his eyes. "You call this a technique?"

Following his words, the freezing aura around Wangchen suddenly exploded in intensity. It surged up his sword-wielding hand and left a layer of frost that extended all the way to his elbow.

"It's barely passable."

His words were without emotion. The originally stalled flow of energy was manually forced to circulate once again, accompanied by the roar of the sword aura.

Wangchen was out for blood.

The blade cleaved the other in two, severing his body as well as half of his soul with the sword aura. This, in addition to the awe-inspiring spiritual energy of a Hollowed Stage sword cultivator, completely ripped apart the demon's power.

Blood sprayed everywhere from the corpse. It landed in his hair and dripped down, staining his snow white clothes with crimson. There were even specks on his face.

Jiang Yinghe looked on as Xiao Xuanyu's other half of his soul gave up on his body and fled. It was only when it dove through the moon of the illusory realm that he struck his sword into the ground and spat out a mouthful of blood.

As expected, the manual recirculation of energy has side effects.

Why are even handsome men so dangerous this year? That bastard probably couldn't even get it up...ow.

He couldn't believe he still had the energy to curse at this time. He gasped for breath. His injuries seemed to exacerbate whatever the fuck that son of a bitch used on him, and the circulation in his body was almost stagnant.

Jiang Yinghe's consciousness grew thin. He didn't notice the blood on his hands drip onto his sword pendant where it was slowly absorbed.

—

Business was booming as always back in the brothel, with even more customers arriving as the night went on.

Chang Ye held a cup of tea in his hand as he watched Qin Jun pace in front of him. He grew increasingly annoyed. "Can you stop already? You're bothering me."

Qin Jun turned to glare at him. He was just looking to pick a fight. Without changing his expression, he retorted, "Then little shidi should also put down that cup. You've broken four already."

This was a strange sight to see in a brothel, one reminiscent of husbands waiting for their wife to give birth. And each one was more unstable than the last. Chang Ye was bothered enough to unconsciously crush cups in his hands just drinking tea.

Beside the duo, Li Huanhan suddenly opened his eyes, revealing a dark expression.

The mirror stone had been tainted by blood.

He stood. "Qin Jun, watch over the array. I'm going in to take a look."

Qin Jun followed him up. His voice was impatient. "I'm going with you, Chang Ye will be fine by himself."

Chang Ye immediately interrupted his words. "There's no way I'm waiting here alone. Who knows what you two intend to do in there?"

Their communication broke down due to their mutual distrust. At that moment, the originally stable inner dimension seemed to ripple as something flew out. The scent of demonic energy grew thick in the air.

The tense standoff immediately changed. Chang Ye activated the transmissions tablet without a second thought. The three of them then silently entered the array Shizun had put down.

The illusory realm remained. It was one of the most complex variations of the He Huan sect. Unless the caster wills it otherwise, intruders would be trapped in a never-ending maze once they set foot inside.

Li Huanhan was apathetic about the maze in front of him or the whereabouts of the other two. He pulled out the Jimei sword and allowed his long-restrained demonic energy to run along the length of the blade, bringing to life the designs carved on it.

No matter how kind and caring he may act, he was a heavenly demon at his core.

The bloodlust and wrath he had suppressed flared up in those blood-red eyes until they resembled a bloody inferno.

An incredible amount of demonic energy tore the maze apart piece by piece. The half of Xiao Xuanyu's damaged soul that escaped was soon revealed.

Xiao Xuanyu paused and widened his eyes.

From what he had gathered, Jiang Yinghe had only been accompanied by a few disciples. Why was there a demonic cultivator of this calibre here?!

The man in front of him was cloaked in darkness and his heavenly demonic physique was immediately apparent. His appearance matched that of the rumoured eldest disciple. He swept his gaze over and coldly spoke.

"Is it you?"

Xiao Xuanyu: ...I think it's a bit too late to deny that now.

"Where is my Shizun?"

Xiao Xuanyu had only half of his soul left. Facing that demonic sword in his hands that just had a few of its restrictions lifted, he felt an overwhelming sense of dread. Only one thought echoed through his dazed mind.

What kind of disciples....has that Jiang Yinghe.....been collecting.....

Author's Corner

He's collected a demonic cultivator, a ghost cultivator and an archdevil!

Xiao Xuanyu: How can a villain like me only touch his hair?! Author, wait, isn't this unfair? Hey–

Author: Do you know how happy those three would be to touch his hair? Be more grateful for what you have!

OceanofPDF.com

CH25 - A BIG COMMOTION (Draft)

Editor: chestnutwhale

It was the first time that Jiang Yinghe had felt like this.

Back on Earth, he was the type that tended to close himself off from society. He only had a few friends and little interest beyond gaming and reading.

He's never felt so-

Hot.

His whole body was hot, so hot that his brain was practically boiling. His hand remained tightly gripped on his sword which was the only cool sensation he could feel. Even the air he breathed in was warm.

If Jiang Yinghe hadn't become independent at a young age, he would've started to cry already from how miserable he felt.

He kept enduring, but that obscene smell clung to him relentlessly, showing not the slightest hint of letting up anytime soon. The scent of blood and the cold fragrance of his body mixed together to give off a uniquely chilling yet vivacious aroma.

The Seven Days of Joy was one of the highest level creations of the He Huan sect. Combined with the demonic techniques utilized by a cultivator of the same realm as him, even someone as steadfast as Jiang Yinghe was powerless to resist.

His muddled consciousness faded in and out. The sword pendant on Wangchen brushed over the back of his hand with a feather-light touch. The tassel on the end made his skin itch.

Jiang Yinghe tried to circulate his energy to defend against the spread of the poison in his body, but he was fighting a losing battle. His eyes slowly gained a layer of moisture. He really couldn't hold on much longer.

A familiar pair of arms embraced him and lowered the temperature of his burning body.

Li Huanhan was hugging him.

His eldest disciple always had a dangerous aura around him, but when he embraced him, a soft side for him alone was all that was left.

Jiang Yinghe recognized him. He trusted his own disciple's character and personality, plus Huanhan already had someone in his heart, so he couldn't possibly...

His train of thought came to a crashing halt. Didn't his first disciple like men?!

Was this really appropriate then? Two single men together..... Before Jiang Yinghe could retreat, his finger was captured by the other person. A clear stream of spiritual energy entered to break the ongoing stalemate in his body.

Jiang Yinghe relaxed– Just because he liked men doesn't mean he can't discern between them! More than that, I'm his Shizun!

Look at how filial he is: a shining example of a future immortal cultivator raised under the flag of socialism!

A miraculous surge of pride rose in Jiang Yinghe's heart. He quickly clasped his hand tightly over Huanhan's, leaning closer to his chest as he asked, "Where are the others? What about the dimensional array? A fragment of Xiao Xuanyu's soul managed to escape...

"That demonic cultivator is dead."

Jiang Yinghe received a big shock. "......Are you hurt?"

If his disciple was able to say that, he must have fought him. Even though Xiao Xuanyu's strength was greatly diminished, there was still a distance of two realms between them. How could he have emerged unharmed?

Upon the silence from his disciple, Jiang Yinghe was just about to ask more questions when he heard the other's hoarse voice.

"Shizun," Li Huanhan seemed to struggle to suppress his emotions. He lowered his head to suck in a deep breath by his neck. "worry about yourself first."

With an influx of fresh spiritual energy, Jiang Yinghe was doing much better than before. He was reminded by Li Huanhan of his current state and worried.

Against the effects of the Seven Days of Joy, one could only wait it out. He closed his eyes to concentrate on eliminating the foreign forces in his body.

It was only after Jiang Yinghe shut his eyes completely that Li Huanhan dared to take a good look at him.

This was a once in a lifetime opportunity, but to Li Huanhan it was less of an opportunity than a grueling test of his willpower.

Shizun had not yet realized his intentions, and it was not yet the right time to reveal them. But it was during this transitional period that this plum blossom was forced to mature and bloomed in front of him.

He slowly lifted a hand to run through Shizun's inky black locks. He wanted to touch his cheek but refrained.

Li Huanhan stared vacantly at him.

He never thought that the world 'helpless' could one day be used to describe him.

His lips curled in a self-deprecating smile. Noticing the splatters of blood on Jiang Yinghe's cheek, he carefully wiped them away with a fingertip.

The corners of Shizun's eyes remained moist and red like tears had been forced out.

Li Huanhan knew that he wasn't a gentleman in any sense of the word. His jealousy, greed and possessive nature were an integral part of him, seemingly carved into his bones. These feelings only became stronger over time.

But his desire to cherish and watch attentively over a certain someone grew alongside them.

Jiang Yinghe could hear the other's breathing become harsh.

He split his attention to ask, "What's wrong?"

Before the sound of his voice had faded, he could sense another set of footsteps and spiritual energy approaching. They belonged to Qin Jun.

"Qin-shidi came." Li Huanhan said.

Jiang Yinghe made a noise of agreement before he realized something and raised his eyes. "Who's watching over the array then?"

"When the inner dimension showed signs of movement, Chang Ye shidi activated the transmission tablet." Qin Jun replied.

".....Good."

Jiang Yinghe breathed a sigh of relief, but he felt like he'd blown the situation out of proportion. Since Xiao Xuanyu was already dead, any remaining traces of demonic energy wouldn't be too troublesome to deal with. Fellow Peng Lai sect cultivators can help clean up.

He sat in between the two, not noticing the silent exchange between Qin Jun and Li Huanhan. They had fought an entire battle right over their Shizun's head.

Qin Jun retracted his gaze and sensed an uncharacteristic warmth radiating from Jiang Yinghe's body.

The usually cold fragrance seemed to heat up at this moment.

Qin Jun sent spiritual energy through his back, his hand a mere layer of fabric away from the other's skin.

The last time he held his Shizun, he could feel the other's narrow yet muscular waist. This time he moved his hand from his back and could feel how light the other really was.

He was lighter than the spirits that resided in the ghost city. Qin Jun stared down for a while. His bone hand tidied Shizun's hair compulsively before reaching to brush back some strands from his ear.

His cold finger bones were repelled. Gray eyes met blood-red ones.

Qin Jun glared at Li Huanhan in warning and smirked arrogantly. "Does Shizun feel uncomfortable anywhere?"

He was asking a question he already knew the answer to. Not bothering to hide his actions from Li Huanhan, he came close enough for his warm breath to brush past the nape of Jiang Yinghe's neck.

"If you still don't feel well," Qin Jun paused for a moment before slowly continuing. "although this disciple's realm is still unstable, I have reached the Primordial God level so I can help Shizun....."

He couldn't finish his sentence.

Chang Ye made his long overdue entrance, his entire body emitting the refreshing scent of green tea as he approached. He called out to Jiang Yinghe as he bounded over to his side–

And then this little devil was intercepted in midair by Li Huanhan. His face was blank and his voice calm. "Little shidi's cultivation is insufficient, so it would be better for you to stay away."

Chang Ye's mind went blank. He tried to argue, "My cultivation is already...."

"With your Shixiongs here," Qin Jun said with a 'friendly' smile. "how can we let you bear this 'burden'?"

Although the three of them did not get along, they had to show restraint in front of Jiang Yinghe. Chang Ye clenched his hand into fists, trying to fight the urge to start something. He watched the other two provide energy with a difficult expression.

It was only under the combined efforts of his disciples and himself that Jiang Yinghe was able to barely suppress the effects of the Seven Days of Joy.

Sweat dampened the hair on his forehead as he let out a long breath. He tried to stand up but a sudden rush of weakness softened all his limbs.

His vision went black as he toppled into the arms of one of his disciples. At the same time, since its master was dead, the illusory realm inside the dimensional array chose this moment to collapse.

With a great amount of effort, Jiang Yinghe managed to climb out of his disciple's lap. Under the moonlight, he met the astonished eyes of Yan-shijie and several of her personal disciples standing in front of him.

Jiang Yinghe was like a deer caught in headlights.

Yan Caiwei looked on like a chicken with its head cut off.

Jiang Yinghe: "Shijie....."

The purpled-clad Yan Caiwei was silent for quite a while before replying, stumbling over her words. "Jiang-shidi, isn't this....."

She paused and carefully asked. "Isn't this too risqué?"

Jiang Yinghe: "...What."

Yan Caiwei felt a blush rise on her old face. "Well, even your shijie has never seen a sight as bold as this before."

She hesitated and swallowed nervously. "I mean doing it right in the middle of a brothel in front of everyone... It doesn't seem right."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

Author's Corner

HeHe, do you think that this is all it takes to suppress the aphrodisiac? Your way of thinking is too pure~ The next chapter will have a virgin like you gain (stimulate) some (your) experience (senses).

OceanofPDF.com

CH26.1 - A CENSORED DREAM (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Peng Lai sect.

The incense burner let out a white smoke that gradually dispersed in the palace. Zhou Zhengping took away his hand from Jiang Yinghe and shifted his whisk. He sighed, "Your injuries are due to forcefully circulating energy through your meridians. Although you received spiritual energy from others, your foundation is still damaged."

Yan Caiwei added on from beside him, "That agrees with what I found when I checked. Jiang-shidi is of a higher realm than me, so healing this injury will mostly be up to himself."

Jiang Yinghe nodded and retracted his wrist back under his sleeve. "It appears worse than it actually is."

Yun Buxiu who was there the entire time snorted. "No it looks exactly as bad as it is. What else do you call blocked meridian circulation and damage to your foundation? If an injury like yours persists, how will you endure your next tribulation?"

Jiang Yinghe slowly took a sip of tea. "It will be fine. Besides, who knows when my next tribulation will take place?"

"It's because we don't know that we have to be more careful." said Yun Buxiu, "I heard Yan-shijie's disciples talking about how you and those bastard..."

He was planning to say those 'bastard disciples', but a terrifying and inexplicable fear arose in his mind like he had been harmed by them before. It was hair-raising enough to make him take a pause. He could only look disappointedly at Jiang Yinghe, before continuing, "...those disciples. You—you four did that?"

Jiang Yinghe: "...It's not what you're thinking."

"Even one is one too many." Xiao Yun-shidi took a deep breath as he spoke from his heart. "Abbot Chan Qing has already said you will have a test of mentality related to romance. In the worst case you could lose your soul. Jiang-shixiong..."

Yan Caiwei stopped him with a tug on his sleeve. She cleared her throat. "The situation really was different from what Xiao Yun-shidi is thinking. The three of them were merely replenishing your Jiang-shixiong's energy reserves so he could suppress the underhanded method used by a demonic cultivator. Their intentions were pure."

Yun Buxiu snatched back his sleeve and began to pace in front of the others. He said impatiently, "In the end, I still think that Jiang-shixiong should stay in Peng Lai to recuperate."

Jiang Yinghe drank some more tea to ease his throat before putting the cup down. "There's no need. I will be able to take good care of myself. There's still no solution for Jun-er's hand, so I have asked someone to inquire about it at Yao Wang valley. Chang Ye also needs a saber to be commissioned ...After cultivating for so long, my injury will heal in the blink of an eye."

He continued with a raised brow. "Isn't a Hollowed Cave demonic cultivator being eliminated by Huanhan and I a good thing for the world?"

It's like catching a serial killer on Earth. Not only is it a good deed, there would also be awards and praise aplomb. Jiang Yinghe had been secretly happy in his heart for a long time, but he received only concern about his injuries from these sect siblings of his.

"It is a good thing," Zhou Zhengping said steadily, "but it's not worth you becoming injured over. Since you say that your disciple was helping you recover from the underhanded methods of that demonic cultivator, what exactly did he do?"

Jiang Yinghe was too embarrassed to explain the effects of the Seven Days of Joy or whatever it was. He tried to calm down and said, "It's a type of illusion to confuse the mind."

Zhou Zhengping nodded and didn't think more of it. Then he saw Yan Caiwei who was listening in from beside him choke on her tea. She glanced up at Jiang Yinghe before putting down her cup.

She wiped her mouth and helped to explain. "Yes...it's a type of illusion. You all know that the He Huan Sect specialises in illusions. Why don't we immediately let Jiang-shidi return to his residence to recuperate?"

Neither Zhou Zhengping nor Xiao Yun-shidi voiced any disagreement. Jiang Yinghe slightly relaxed and nodded to Yan-shijie as he departed Peng Lai's main palace.

Only when that figure in white had left their sights did Zhou Zhengping follow up. "What kind of illusion was it?"

Yan Caiwei replied helplessly, "An illusion of affection."

Yun Buxiu who had calmed down angrily lifted his eyes at those words. "And his disciples still surrounded him?!"

Xiao Yun-shidi looked up to Jiang Yinghe as a role model and was very partial towards him. He spat out his grievances and rose to leave, muttering, "I have to ask those juniors if they have impure intentions towards their Shizun. No one is going to touch him on my watch while that test of mentality is still—"

He paused as that bone-deep sense of danger rose up again. At the same time, Yan Caiwei called out to him.

"Come back." Yan-shijie knocked on the table. "Your shixiong is missing his passion root so there's no need to worry."

Xiao Yun-shidi was able to gradually calm down at the reminder. He later said, "Even if he doesn't have a passion root, he cares so much for his disciples. Wouldn't it break his heart to learn that some, if not all of them, are secretly interested in him?"

"That's a problem that they will have to solve themselves." Yan Caiwei said. "Everyone's journey to immortality is different. Maybe Jiang-shidi must experience something like this so that he can grow stronger from it."

Yun Buxiu was just about to argue with her when Zhangmen-shixiong spoke.

"That's enough." Zhou Zhengping said. "People's fortunes are their own. Jiang-shidi was never one to believe in fate, so he wouldn't believe in a relationship being his end. He trusts in the ability of men to conquer the heavens, so let us put our trust in him."

Qing Jing Peak, White Crane Jade Manor.

The crane spirits had been waiting for their master to return for a long time, so it took a while before they were satisfied with how much Jiang Yinghe petted them and let him through.

Everything was still the same inside. The cold jade walls continued to give off a refreshingly cool aura. Jiang Yinghe immediately spotted Chang Ye who was reaching for a book on the shelves.

The bookshelf didn't contain anything related to cultivation, just old records of Peng Lai and some stories from the cultivation world.

Chang Ye was wearing a red outfit with darker flowers embroidered on the edges. There was a string of jade beads at his waist that lightly swayed as he moved.

Jiang Yinghe stared for a moment before realizing how tall he had grown. He was no longer the youth that used to squirm into his arms. Although Chang Ye still had a youthful appearance and childish personality, his body resembled that of a young adult. Only half of his hair was tied up and the other half was free to scatter on his shoulder.

Jiang Yinghe stood there a while longer as he thought back to many years ago when he found him encased in ice. What hurt the most about people that used to be young and helpless wasn't their vulnerability, but their gradual road to independence.

Chang Ye seemed to notice someone behind him as he took out a book. He turned to reveal half of his exquisite features.

The originally calm eyes lit up once they saw that Jiang Yinghe had returned, revealing an unbridled joy.

"Shizun!" He bounded over and dove into his arms like he always did. Just when he was about to continue acting spoiled, the other person tapped on his shoulder.

"Chang Ye," Jiang Yinghe said softly, "you can't continue acting like this or you won't grow up properly."

Chang Ye disagreed and said in a small, wronged voice, "Does Shizun not want to dote on Ye-er anymore?"

Jiang Yinghe knew he would react like this and sighed. He reached over and flicked his forehead. "Why are you thinking all day about how to stick to me instead of cultivating?"

Chang Ye reached up to cover where his forehead had been hit, then quickly showed the book he had just taken out to Jiang Yinghe. He asked curiously, "Shizun, what is this?"

Jiang Yinghe casually glanced down only to freeze.

A column of simplified Chinese was on the cover, written by him. It read—

'How to Care for Sows After Birth'

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

If he remembered correctly, this was from when he just started cultivating and was not about pigs. Tong Guiyu had shoved this little yellow book into his personal dimension. He thought the cover was too vulgar so he wrapped it in a new one ...He probably didn't throw it away then because the Jiang Yinghe in the past was still a virgin and was still interested in stuff like that.

In fact, he was still a virgin now.

The bookshelf of his residence was filled with so many old books that he had long lost track of them all. He looked at the innocent expression on his youngest disciple's face and felt a deep sense of shame blossom in his heart. He thought about what to say before speaking in what he hoped was a nonchalant tone, "It's a guide to caring for devil beasts and of no use to you. Leave it here."

Chang Ye considered the words 'caring for devil beasts' in his head before sweeping his gaze down to the overly simplified characters on the cover. He hesitantly said, "Shizun likes to...raise devil beasts?"

Jiang Yinghe did have several cranes in his front yard, although they were spirit beasts, they were technically also a type of devil beast. After some thought, he replied, "I like to raise obedient and cute ones."

Chang Ye blinked and scuttled over. "I'm good at being obedient and cute, so will Shizun raise me?"

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look. He took that little yellow book from his hands and said, "Haven't I been raising you already? You weren't this brave when I first took you in that year."

He remembered the incident where he was poisoned by the Seven Days of Joy as he spoke. "When that demonic cultivator... Were you scared then?"

If he had asked this question to Li Huanhan or Qin Jun, they would've denied it with their next breath. Only Chang Ye would hesitate slightly before admitting, "A little bit."

He wasn't scared of that demonic cultivator but of Shizun getting hurt inside and him being unable to arrive until it was too late.

Jiang Yinghe warmly replied, "It's okay to be scared. You won't need to be anymore when you get stronger because you can protect the ones you love. Before then, you will be safe under Shizun and your Shixiongs' wings."

He rubbed his little disciple's hair to comfort him while placing the book further away. He didn't expect that momentary distraction was enough for his little disciple to pounce on him and send them both down.

The two of them were standing near the bed, so it didn't hurt even if they fell. But Jiang Yinghe still felt Chang Ye's hand cushioning his head. That hand was slender and soft, with only a thin layer of calluses from holding a sword.

The other person's untied hair drifted down to mingle with Jiang Yinghe's own inky locks.

Chang Ye's eyes were bright. His protective seal glowed intermittently. The half of his face that was shown was a devastating beauty, while the other ruined half was covered by a black mask depicting a vicious beast.

"I want to protect Shizun as well." Chang Ye hugged him from above. His head was buried in the nook of his Shizun's shoulder, and he spoke in a gloomy voice. "Please don't treat me like I'm still a child, Shizun. I'm actually..."

He suddenly paused and looked up to take in Jiang Yinghe's visage.

Actually what? Hasn't he always protected him from the shadows? Right, he's not like the other two. He just wants, just wants to face him...

The voice in Chang Ye's heart grew quieter. All his emotions were like a tightly wound string struggling to contain the magnitude of his lies.

His erratic heartbeat, the warmly flushed tips of his ears and the uncontrollable feelings in his heart... All of it seemed to betray his gradually twisted intentions.

His emotions reached a breaking point as they snapped one by one.

Chang Ye came even closer as he heard Jiang Yinghe's warm laugh.

"You act so childishly but also want me to not treat you like one?" Jiang Yinghe didn't notice anything was wrong since his little disciple has always been this shamelessly spoiled. Embracing each other on the bed wasn't anything too taboo. "Then I'll be waiting for you to grow up."

Before he could finish, he found his wrist caught by Chang Ye, who said seriously, "When I grow up, will Shizun be willing to stay under Ye-er's wings?"

Jiang Yinghe was touched by this display of piety, but he had to refuse. "The path to the Dao is difficult. I am already at the peak and treading in unknown territory. There is no need for someone of the younger generation to pave the road for me."

Chang Ye looked at Jiang Yinghe with a sincere look in his eyes. There seemed to be no trace of romantic interest in that innocent gaze.

Only he knew he was caught in an inferno.

He lifted a hand to play around with the hair beside Jiang Yinghe's ear. "Shizun, I've remembered some things from my past."

Jiang Yinghe listened attentively.

"When I completed my golden core a few days ago, some indistinct memories came into focus." Chang Ye said quietly. "All I could remember was darkness, blood, and an endless slaughter, like the only way to survive was to kill... The kind of things best forgotten."

He rested his head on Jiang Yinghe's shoulder and closed his eyes.

"I've never met someone like Shizun, who treats the whole world with kindness."

Jiang Yinghe never knew his youngest disciple thought so highly of him. His words were just too pitiful to bear!

He was just an ordinary guy trying to slowly find his way home. He didn't bring them along purely out of the goodness of his heart.

"There are many people like that where I grew up." Jiang Yinghe looked at him with a soft look in his eyes. "They were willing to be righteous and helpful and to make the world a better place."

Jiang Yinghe poured out another bowl of chicken soup according to the education curriculum in his heart. He really felt like his style of teaching could easily raise upstanding pillars of society. He added another phrase.

"Chang Ye is too harsh a name." He said, "But it doesn't matter because the moon will accompany you through the night."

Chang Ye didn't speak but tightened his arms around Jiang Yinghe's waist. "...I want Shizun to accompany me."

He fully realized it only now—Jiang Yinghe was the brightly shining moon beside him, while he was just a star lost in the vast night sky. He didn't just want to protect him, and it wasn't just a desire to repay him. He wanted to accompany him and be by his side for thousands of years to come.

For the rest of their lives.

I wish that I was a star, and you were the moon.

—

Jiang Yinghe tested the progression of his cultivation until nightfall. Only then did he let his youngest disciple go rest.

It was only later that night that Jiang Yinghe realized that Chang Ye's progress bar shot forward by a huge margin. But his cultivation level didn't change? He couldn't figure out what was going on.

He sat on his bed contemplating the factors that might affect the progress bar like 'mental health' or 'master-disciple relationship'. After thinking it over, it's likely that the two aforementioned things could be affecting it.

Especially that second one... Huh? The already good relationship between him and his disciples can improve even further? To what end? Are they going to make a blood oath and become a family?

Jiang Yinghe's thoughts veered further off track in a humorous direction. He suddenly remembered that little yellow book on the nightstand.

He picked it up and absentmindedly flipped open the present he once got from Tong Guiyu.

He sucked in a quick breath and immediately slapped it shut.

...He had flipped to a page with pictures.

It was too much excitement for this thousand-year bachelor.

Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath and began reading from the first page. He slowly relaxed after a few more pages.

He didn't seem to react to it at all, so why did he chase Tong Guiyu around with Wangchen and cut off half his hair back then? It seems that even a thousand years of no action still counted as a kind of experience. A book like this wasn't enough to affect him!

Strangely satisfied, Jiang Yinghe put aside the book and prepared to go to bed.

The night was well underway when the crane spirits resting at the entrance were startled awake by a series of footsteps. They looked up to see a dark shadow enter the manor.

Only Jiang Yinghe and his three disciples could freely enter the White Crane Jade Manor, so the cranes decided not to wake their master and drifted back off into dreamland.

That person's body gave off a slightly cool air. He waited until it dispersed before approaching the bed. He stood there for a very long time.

Long enough that he thought he might turn into a statue.

Before he came, his heart felt like it was on fire. It was only able to calm down when he saw Shizun's face.

The other person was just too beautiful even when sleeping. His loose black hair was spread across the bedding and his skin was as white as frost. Even his breathing was slow and steady.

He only sat by his side for a while when he noticed that Jiang Yinghe was slightly frowning in his sleep as if he was somewhat uncomfortable.

Rain: Haha Jiang Yinghe you're going to regret this so much later.

Sahl: Yun Buxiu: 'Even one is one too many.' I laughed so hard at this!

Please give a warm welcome to the new editor for this novel, Sahloknir!

OceanofPDF.com

CH26.2 - A CENSORED DREAM (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe really did feel some discomfort.

The things that he dreamt about were...just too shameless to put into words! Jiang Yinghe has always thought of himself as a good teacher and a righteous cultivator, but who would've thought that his mind would wander to such strange places when asleep?

In his dream, a very good looking man was on top of him unbuttoning his shirt while asking him in a low voice, "How many people would you like? Do you like men?" There were two other men whose hands also travelled over his sensitive body.

How—how many? Even now he couldn't wrap his head around it, not to mention inside the dream.

What do you mean by 'how many do you like'? This kind of thing was only supposed to happen when two people have feelings for each other, right? Let's not even talk about how the genders were off, even the number of participants was wrong in the end!

He knew that he was dreaming, but strangely, he couldn't wake up. The remnants of the Seven Days of Joy in his body began to smoulder.

Then what seemed like a cool hand brushed against his forehead, bringing with it a refreshing wave of energy that allowed him to startle awake and reflect on what his life has come to.

There was nobody around, as if the hand that woke him up was just another part of his dream. Jiang Yinghe pinched the bridge of his nose. The number of people at the end of his dream and the things they were... All he did was take one look at that book before bed! Wasn't this progression way too quick?!

He was unable to calm down for quite a while. He reflected on why he suddenly dreamt about that sort of thing. Then his thoughts shifted to his never-tested preferences,

Although his head had cooled, his body had not.

Jiang Yinghe silently shifted his gaze that held a trace of sorrow. The remnants of the Seven Days of Joy seemed to be fanning the flames that were cooking his body from within.

His mind was about to spin itself out of his head. He could only give up and reluctantly untie his snow white sleeping robe.

It seems that every pure virgin had to rely on their five-fingered friend in the end.

But Jiang Yinghe was completely inexperienced and unable to complete his task even after quite a while. Eventually he just flopped into bed and ignored it, hoping the problem would go away.

He finally realized how fearsome He Huan sect could be.

Jiang Yinghe's mind was muddled like he was half-dreaming. He wanted to circulate energy to speed up the process when he remembered that his foundation was strained.

He was hurt because he forcefully used his foundation to suppress the side effects. He might have managed to cut his opponent into pieces, but the mouthful of blood he coughed up afterwards hurt like hell.

Just as Jiang Yinghe hesitated, the scene from his dreams seemed to reappear. A slightly cold hand landed on his shoulder and a voice quietly

said something.

Jiang Yinghe thought to himself, was he watching a drama series in his dreams? Were all of his dreams going to be full of censored content now?

At least there was only one person this time. To be more precise, there was one hand.

The other seemed to hesitate for some reason, but its movements downwards were precise and relieved the hot urgency that Jiang Yinghe felt.

Jiang Yinghe lowered his head and curled up slightly, his breathing becoming erratic. The effects of the poison and the hand's ministrations built up until the crisis point.

All his stress melted away. The strange feelings that he felt bound together before dispersing.

Moonlight spilled into the manor, shining on his misty eyes and the way his long fingers unconsciously gripped the bedding.

Jiang Yinghe's mess of thoughts began to slowly organize themselves until he emerged from the sea of pleasure to sense the presence of someone in the darkness.

But he drifted back to sleep before discovering who it was.

—

The next day, Jiang Yinghe immediately destroyed that little yellow book.

Who knew he would react like that! Whether it was because he was inexperienced or because of the poison in his body, it was best to discard such things.

Due to this, Jiang Yinghe even took the initiative to write Tong Guiyu a letter, something he hadn't done the entire time they'd known each other. He sent one of the cranes to deliver it to He Huan sect.

The light form of Hollowed Cave cultivators was very fast. After enough time to finish two pots of tea, the cries of the cranes could be heard from the entrance. Jiang Yinghe eased the restriction on the doors to see the flamboyantly dressed Tong Guiyu waltz in with a smile on his face.

...He was about to burst with laughter upon finding out that the frigid Jiang Yinghe was faced with such a problem. It was like he came to watch a good show.

Jiang Yinghe was wearing a white, long-sleeved outfit with faint gold embroidering on the trim. His cold fragrance was present and everything seemed normal, so it was impossible to tell that he was troubled by that matter.

There was a pot of tea and a chess set arranged on the jade table. Jiang Yinghe had been playing against himself for a while. He motioned for Tong Guiyu to sit across from him before pouring him a lukewarm cup of tea.

"You implied that we wouldn't meet for quite some time the last time we saw each other, so why call for me so soon?" Tong Guiyu was wearing a pink robe that was the shade of sakura blossoms in March. He blinked at him with his fox-like eyes. "I can't wait to hear how our Xuan Wei Xianjun ended up like this."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look. "This master helped clean up after you, yet you still have the heart to laugh at me."

"Hahahaha, I really didn't want to laugh." Tong Guiyu rubbed his cheek while laughing. "But whenever I think about the fact that you called me over for this kind of thing I can't help it. Hahahaha."

Jiang Yinghe: "...Can you speak like a human?"

Tong Guiyu only wanted to laugh more. He emptied the cup and said, "Fine then. Tell me, how does it feel like to be affected by the Seven Days of Joy?"

Jiang Yinghe expressionessly stared at him. "It's nothing."

"Really?" Tong Guiyu had great confidence in the goods that came out of his sect. "Then I guess Xuan Wei Xianjun doesn't need my help after all."

Jiang Yinghe gritted his teeth before spitting out, "I do. I have an ice spiritual root, this thing is going to give me heat stroke."

Tong Guiyu suppressed the urge to burst into laughter again by drinking more tea. "Originally, there was no antidote for this medicine in my sect, plus the formula you were dosed with has been altered by a demonic cultivator..."

He changed the subject once he noticed the frown on Jiang Yinghe's face. "But I can teach you a method to deal with it."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. "Tell me."

"You need to wear this and have a high-level cultivator watch over you during the night." Tong Guiyu took out a bracelet made of icy blue pearls from his personal dimension and placed it on Jiang Yinghe's wrist. "This is the only artifact able to disperse arousal in our sect. But there's a side effect. Once you wear it, you will be unable to circulate your energy and become akin to a mortal."

"When you wear it, you need to have someone you trust support you and purge the residual fragments from your system." Tong Guiyu said. "Your disciples all seem to be up to the task. You should be cured after about a month."

Tong Guiyu was still smiling, and there was an implied meaning in his eyes.

Jiang Yinghe didn't catch it and paused before saying, "This morning Huanhan said that he was going to enter seclusion to prepare for his tribulation. I don't know where he went, so only Jun-er and Chang Ye are left on Qing Jing Peak.

Tong Guiyu asked, "I heard that your second disciple was forced into becoming a Primordial God Zhenren. Are there any lasting effects?"

Jiang Yinghe shook his head. "None, other than his hand."

Tong Guiyu blinked his fox-like eyes at that. "Isn't two people enough? I doubt you can even take one."

Jiang Yinghe didn't really understand what he was talking about. His missing passion root caused him to be a bit obtuse when it came to matters like this. He looked up with a dazed expression to see the person in front of him finish his tea and stand.

"I'll be heading back to He Huan sect then." He said, "I am the deputy sect master after all. I can't be slacking off while the sect master's not there."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. "Thank you for coming."

"No need." Tong Guiyu smiled as he half-jokingly and half-seriously waved his hand. "I should be thanking Xuan Wei Xianjun for getting rid of a big thorn in He Huan's side."

Before Jiang Yinghe could reply, the other person bowed deeply to him.

He slightly raised his hand and wanted to stop him, but he ultimately remained silent. Instead, he watched Tong Guiyu stand up and leave. As his figure became indistinct, his last words seemed to still be an outrageous joke—

"We were sect siblings for three hundred years, but it took only one season for him to fall to the temptation of demons. It seems that only the two of us treasure the friendship between cultivators. Is it inevitable that desire must always come before love in our world?"

Jiang Yinghe watched him leave from the open doors and sighed. "All this talk about what came first and what is treasured, doesn't it all depend on his mood?"

Jiang Yinghe only took a closer look at the pearl bracelet after Tong Guiyu had left.

There were very few artifacts that decreased arousal in He Huan sect. Their cultivators could be divided into two types: ones who practised dual cultivation with anyone to raise their own level and tended to use more underhanded methods, while the other only did it with their lovers which they took multiples of.

The discussion of whether love or desire came first has been a long-standing debate in He Huan sect, because it was related to the tests of mentality they would experience at the higher levels, and the meaning of the Dao.

Tong Guiyu belonged to the latter group. The Hongyan sword in his hands was very hungry for beauties and love, which is why Hun Yuan Xianjun was able to wield it.

Jiang Yinghe recalled the scene that played out here this morning when Li Huanhan requested leave.

His eldest disciple's black outfit was slightly wrinkled. His mental state didn't seem quite right, as if he hadn't slept a wink last night. Even his voice was strange.

Jiang Yinghe has just woken up from that surreal dream of his. Not only did his head hurt, his temper was also short. When he heard that Li Huanhan wanted to leave to undergo his tribulation in a suitable location, he was just the tiniest bit upset.

Because this didn't seem like the only reason the other person wanted to leave.

If it was just this, why would he pace outside the entrance instead of just coming in? He must be hiding something from me.

Jiang Yinghe was nursing a headache as he wrote that letter to Tong Guiyu inside the manor. He lightly asked, "Have you found a good location?"

"Yes."

Huanhan's voice was somewhat hoarse. For some reason, his words were suffused with deep and concealed emotion.

"What kind of place is it?"

The incense burner to the side was burning the book that caused the situation last night. A cold wind blew in from the rest of Qing Jing Peak, bringing the cool morning dew to the corners of his black clothes.

Li Huanhan remained silent for a while before replying, "A place that can allow this disciple to remain calm for the time being."

Jiang Yinghe slowed down his writing to listen to his next words.

"To be kind and not cruel to 'him'." Li Huanhan said. "This disciple fears doing something that might...hurt him."

Jiang Yinghe immediately realized why he came here.

Of his two disciples that liked to 'eat the grass that grew near their burrow', Qin Jun was less problematic since he liked girls. Li Huanhan on the other hand was as bent as mosquito incense. He was still young, so staying too long beside the one he liked might lead to unfortunate situations...plus the other person was straight.

He put down his pen and adjusted his clothes before heading outside to where his eldest disciple stood under the cover of dawn and morning dew. There was a new sword pendant on his blood-red sword, woven in the same fashion as the one on Wangchen.

Jiang Yinghe observed him from a distance and was able to discern a deep sense of restraint from him.

"Then go."

Jiang Yinghe continued calmly, "But don't go too far. Peng Lai will be waiting for you, Qing Jing Peak will be waiting for you..."

Li Huanhan stared at his lips as the other person continued warmly.

"...Shizun will also wait for you."

That was all he needed.

Li Huanhan wanted to say something more, but nothing came out as he met Jiang Yinghe's clear eyes.

Jiang Yinghe was worried from the bottom of his heart about the upcoming test of his disciple's heart. His thoughts then shifted to the joys and sorrows of raising children. He returned to working on the letter before sending it off with one of the cranes.

He sighed. There was only one thing left to do.

...Chang Ye was still young and this was the first night. Should he ask Jun-er to come?

This man who had doubts about his orientation had no idea...how his words could be misconstrued.

—

Qin Jun knew immediately when Li Huanhan left.

He saw the heavenly demon make a few hidden hand signs around the White Crane Jade Manor, like he was setting down traps. Then he turned and glared at him before leaving.

Qin Jun licked his teeth. Something was off about that demon, but he couldn't put his finger on it. Did he discover his sense of kindness and decide to give up on making their Shizun a furnace?

Not just him, Chang Ye probably also knew right away. The three of them existed in a state of mutual distrust. Li Huanhan's sudden departure, however, was outside of his calculations.

In Qin Jun's eyes, he had to fight to the end for the things he liked. There was no way he was giving up halfway. Li Huanhan didn't seem to be giving up—it's more like he finally could afford to break through to the Primordial

God stage. Was he planning to take Shizun back by force if he exposed himself?

That's the thought that ran through his mind that night when he saw Jiang Yinghe.

He was only wearing a long, white robe, with an icy blue pearl bracelet on his narrow wrist that accentuated his pure white skin.

Qin Jun stared for quite a while as he approached Shizun to help him cleanse his body of the residual medications.

Although Jiang Yinghe explained the situation to him, he was still somewhat embarrassed to see Qin Jun so focused on him. He decided to break up the awkward atmosphere with some small talk. "Huanhan entered seclusion today."

Qin Jun did not appear surprised. His right hand that was only bones squeezed Jiang Yinghe's finger. "Chang Ye and I both know this."

That makes sense. With how close they are, Huanhan must have bid them farewell. Jiang Yinghe nodded as if this was normal before thinking to ask something. "Jun-er, do you know where he went then?"

Even though he did not ask the person in question, he was still quite worried. Jiang Yinghe felt like he had become an old father.

Qin Jun did not reply. He tightened his grip on the finger and began to massage it. He said sourly, "Is Shizun only able to discuss Li-shixiong with this disciple?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback as his finger was tightly clenched.

"I only want to talk to Shizun about us." Qin Jun said, "Shizun wouldn't be safe wearing this bracelet. Chang Ye shidi is also too childish to help. Why don't I do it for the entire month?"

"Not sleeping for a month is difficult, even for cultivators." Jiang Yinghe said.

How can he be tired when he's clearly in heaven?

Qin Jun remained silent as he started circulating his spiritual energy in the technique taught at Peng Lai to help cleanse the remaining fragments from Jiang Yinghe. The closer he got, the harder it was to resist.

The wraith was acting like he was circling his hoard of treasure. He caught a whiff of the other's cold fragrance.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't stay up all night to begin with, plus he felt safe with Jun-er guarding him. He fell asleep after midnight to the sound of the other person's breathing.

This time, his dreams remained clear of the things that frustrated him before.

Just a hidden kiss that landed on his lips.

Author's Corner:

I wish that I was a star, and you were the moon. May our lights intersect on every night – Fan Chengda's poem 'As the cart sways'

Tong Guiyu: HeHe ah, although the number of people was unusual, at least they were all pretty high quality!

Jiang Yinghe: Are you speaking human right now?!

Rain: 10k character chapters hurt my soul and my hands. At least Qin Jun is happy (▽)

Sahl: Disciples are getting very, um, touchy-feely. I guess Chang Ye is next . . . hehe!

OceanofPDF.com

CH27.1 - YOU LITTLE PUNK (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe finally had a restful night of sleep.

He wasn't the kind of person that objected too much when his personal space was invaded. Even if Jun-er seemed to get tired and laid down beside him later that night, he didn't wake up.

It's difficult to remain vigilant around those you trust.

Jiang Yinghe drowsily woke up and went about his morning routine. According to Tong Guiyu, if that bracelet is worn at night then the side effects during the day would be negligible.

He took off the bracelet and stored it in his personal dimension. When he went to brush his hair, he discovered a sleek braid in it.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback and examined the braid closer. It was very neatly braided, with a gray thread tightly fastening the end.

He touched it to discover it wasn't a light gray thread but a strand of hair.

Jiang Yinghe was now completely awake. He called out exasperatedly, "Jun-er?"

Low laughter rang out from behind him. Qin Jun was standing by his side, his face contrite but his voice unrepentant. "Last night was too boring. This disciple has offended Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe tried to untie the braid. "Your right hand is only bone now so how is it still so restless?"

His attention was focused once again on all the wrong points. He thought that Qin Jun's handiwork was so skilled that even he couldn't untie it.

Jiang Yinghe struggled some more and began to suspect that Jun-er tied a permanent knot.

Then another hand caught his fingers and encircled his wrist to deftly loosen the strands of hair.

Qin Jun was slightly smiling as he tidied Shizun's hair. "This disciple will take care of it."

Jiang Yinghe closed his eyes and made a noise of agreement. In some aspects Jun-er was even more willful than Chang Ye. Although Chang Ye liked to act spoiled, he didn't go much further than that. Qin Jun always gave Jiang Yinghe the feeling that...he could do anything if motivated enough.

Strange, why would he think that?

He heard a voice beside his ear in the midst of his considerations.

"Shizun," Qin Jun said, "those outside the sect all say that people like me are arrogant and easily led astray. If..."

His words slowed to a stop with a note of tentativeness.

"If this disciple did go down the wrong path, will Shizun still treat me like you do now?"

Qin Jun's fingers ran through Jiang Yinghe's long, silky black hair to gather it in his palm. He secured it with a silver jade crown.

The hairpin he used to affix the crown was engraved with many runes. From this perspective, he could just catch sight of the tip of a pearly white ear.

Jiang Yinghe had given thought to the problem of his disciples straying from the righteous path before. Although he had 20 km long disciple-loving glasses on, he wasn't completely blind. Even though his disciples were dear to him, he wouldn't deny their faults.

Jiang Yinghe paused for a moment before speaking from his heart. "For the sake of the common people I should take care of my own business. But if it involves you then I would guide you back onto the right path."

The movements tidying his hair stopped momentarily.

Qin Jun approached closer from behind, half-hugging his waist. "The right path for me is wherever Shizun is."

Jiang Yinghe thought that this was somewhat strange, but he glossed past it. "If all of you make an effort to remain righteous, you won't be led astray...."

He paused as the Little Jiang Shizun System that had been silent for a long time suddenly popped up. Qin Jun's progress bar became completely pink and tiny hearts even drifted out.

Jiang Yinghe: ...I didn't know this was a magical girl anime now. Is this system broken or something?

"Remain righteous." Qin Jun repeated those words while staring at Jiang Yinghe's long and shapely brows. There was a self-deprecating smile on his lips. "Who decides what is righteous or not? The merciless heavens do not discriminate between good and evil."

Even if the heavens were merciless, Qin Jun still had misgivings about his past life—he was born a wraith and the de facto leader of all ghost cultivators, and this part of his identity was also what lead to his downfall at the hands of the Dao. Is a Half-step Golden Immortal the furthest ghost cultivators could reach?

Qin Jun lowered his eyes and leaned forward to breath that bewitching fragrance deep into his lungs.

If it was a hundred years ago, Qin Jun would wickedly grab his Shizun's waist and use the excuse of being subsumed by countless ghosts to take a few bites, and satisfy the urge to consume the person in front of him, but now—

He watched as Jiang Yinghe met his gaze and said with a serious tone, "The heavens might not be able to discriminate, but the hearts of people can. You just have to hold yourself accountable."

Jiang Yinghe kept pouring more chicken soup as he touched the crown in his hair. There was another braid hidden beneath it, and it was even tied a different way.

Jiang Yinghe: "...Jun-er."

Qin Jun seemed to be holding back his laughter, but he quickly recovered and pretended that he was just coughing. He began to massage Jiang Yinghe's shoulders as his hot breath brushed past his neck.

"Forgive me Shizun," He lowered his head. "but it looks good on you."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look. "I'm going to get angry."

His only answer was his disciple's delighted laughter as he embraced him. His ear was getting warm from the other person's breath.

"It really looks good, don't be picky, Shizun."

...This isn't a matter of preferences. His pride as a teacher was totally deflated because of this braid!

Jiang Yinghe felt like he had completely lost. How did Jun-er have enough energy to not only watch over him all night but even learn how to act unrepentant like Chang Ye?

He gathered up the tattered remains of his pride and sighed.

"Don't do this again or I really will be angry."

He was like a good-natured person issuing empty threats to a misbehaving child. Even his reprimands were suffused with loving warmth.

Little did he know, his three disciples all desired a different kind of love from him.

—

Naturally, Qin Jun wasn't able to 'struggle' to stay up for an entire month. His 'personable and obedient' little shidi quickly joined in to 'relieve' him of this burden.

Jiang Yinghe trusted them both greatly and was fine with either one staying with him. It was just that when it was Chang Ye's turn he would always wake up with an extra person in his arms that sleepily called out "Shizun". With Qin Jun around, he would always find some new way to entertain himself during the night.

Leading to the manor being filled with surprises.

Jiang Yinghe looked around expressionlessly and took in how much the sword mantle had changed in a single night. He suspected that Qin Jun must do this as a hobby or something...did he like to redecorate in his spare time? Why is he so insistent on adding his touch to everything he owns?

He attributed it to one of Qin Jun's quirks as he took the letter that was delivered to his manor from the mouth of a crane. The letter was sealed with the mark of Lan Ruo Temple.

For some reason, when Jiang Yinghe held this letter he felt a bitter sadness in his heart. It didn't seem to be good news.

He placed a finger on the Buddhist seal and inserted a stream of spiritual energy to unlock it and take out the contents.

...It said that Hui Jing Canshi had ascended.

Hui Jing Canshi was always roaming the countryside and mingling with mortals. Unfortunately, a few days ago, he met his demise at the hands of

the Devil Baron Jiuying. He wasn't even left a whole corpse.

Jiang Yinghe had met him before. He recalled him being a steadfast and warm monk practitioner. This type of abrupt farewell was common in his experience. If people didn't depart while alive, then they left when dead.

He stood and fed the letter to the flames. Glancing outside, he could see a figure in red sitting in one of Qing Jing Peak's ancient trees. There was a nest of spirit bird eggs beside him.

Although Chang Ye was becoming a young adult, he very much resembled a child right now. His legs were dangling in midair as he polished his flute. The female bird was standing on the edge of her nest, approaching him bit by bit.

Chang Ye didn't move. He had taken to wearing red lately, which only served to highlight his delicate and fair skin. His face was reminiscent of sakura blossoms. Even having one side hidden by a mask didn't detract from his beauty.

The bird alighted herself on Chang Ye's shoulder, not frightened at all.

He seemed to naturally be good with all spirit animals. Many little beasts that hadn't yet awakened their consciousness or ability to shapeshift liked to be in his presence. Even the spiritual cranes by the entrance were the same.

Jiang Yinghe looked on for a long time and felt as if his heart had been touched...His little disciple was so cute and obedient with an easygoing nature, no wonder animals liked him.

Chang Ye's gentleness was just too eye-catching. His entire person seemed to be filled with the vivacious energy of youth. These past few days Jiang Yinghe had been stunned by the beauty squirming in his arms as he woke up.

And then his mood was lifted even more by his childish antics. What a happy little pistachio.

A weight that Jiang Yinghe didn't even know was there, was lifted from his shoulders. He considered taking little Chang Ye with him to pay his respects to Lan Ruo Temple on behalf of Peng Lai. He hoped that this child could grow up soon and learn to conceal his overly kind and pure nature.

"Shizun!"

On the other side, Chang Ye seemed to notice his Shizun's gaze and immediately jumped off the old pine tree. He waved at him through the window.

Jiang Yinghe nodded. Before he could bring up what he had in mind, he felt little Chang Ye grasp his sleeve and suddenly say, "Qin-shixiong hugged you last night!"

Jiang Yinghe: "...Ah?"

Let's put aside the fact that Qin Jun was reading a book by the candle when he woke up today. Why did Chang Ye sound so upset by this when he squirmed into his arms every other night?

Rain: A war rages on over Jiang Yinghe's interior decorations...

Sahl: Jiang Yinghe—innocently seducing his disciples one bad boy at a time. :joy:

OceanofPDF.com

CH27.2 - YOU LITTLE PUNK (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe was stunned. He saw his youngest disciple huff indignantly as he climbed in through the window and launched himself into his arms. "Shizun shouldn't be sleeping around. Isn't Ye-er alone enough?"

Jiang Yinghe—"Sleeping...around?"

Jiang Yinghe—'sleeping...around?'

He felt like he was being coerced as the other person hugged his waist tightly. His mind was filled with the phrase, 'what to do when my child uses words without knowing what they mean...either endure it or correct them with a beating'.

Chang Ye saw nothing wrong with his word choice. He nuzzled Jiang Yinghe's collarbone hidden underneath a layer of clothes and said in a pitiful voice, "If Shizun doesn't sleep with me then Ye-er is going to get insomnia wuwuwu..."

Jiang Yinghe spoke up. "...Little Scoundrel, do you think about what you say at all?"

Chang Ye wasn't saddened by his reprimand. In fact, he planted a kiss on his cheek and looked up with sparkling eyes. "Shizun, please teach me a good lesson!"

Jiang Yinghe was cold outside but warm-hearted inside so he rarely spoke to others this way. Chang Ye grew excited when he listened and he could

feel his heart pounding. He wanted very badly to crush this person beneath his original form and lick his Shizun's collarbone a few times.

Jiang Yinghe was shocked. "...I've never heard anyone ask such a strange request."

—-

Jiang Yinghe originally planned on only taking Chang Ye back to Lan Ruo Temple, but on the grounds that the Seven Days of Joy still hadn't left in his system and at the advice of his second disciple, he decided to take Qin Jun as well.

In the past few months, he and his disciples had all experienced some form of trial. Jun-er underwent his tribulation to forcefully break through to the Primordial God stage, but he lost his hand in return. Huanhan was experiencing a test of mentality related to his emotions and had retreated into seclusion. And even he himself had gotten a taste of He Huan sect's secret weapon...Unlucky was too light a word to describe it.

Maybe it was due to the recent events, but Zhou Zhengping insisted that he take the constantly on-edge Yun Buxiu along with his disciples to Lan Ruo Temple.

The white-clothed Yun Buxiu was flying on a crane spirit beast while sneaking glances at his Shixiong. He hurried to look away, pretending to drink his tea when Jiang Yinghe put down his cup to look over.

Jiang Yinghe raised an eyebrow. "Did you want to say something to me?"

Yun Buxiu urged his crane closer to the carriage Jiang Yinghe rode in and carefully looked him over before gathering his courage to say, "Shixiong, your clothes..."

Jiang Yinghe was wearing a black robe covered with embroidered cranes. The soft, dark fabric had several cranes in flight woven on it, and there was a silver border about two finger widths wide on the collar and sleeves.

Jiang Yinghe followed the direction of his gaze and saw his Xiao Yun-shidi reach out to lightly flip over his sleeve. There was a high level restriction placed on the silver lining where the words 'Bing Zhi' were written on it.

"I knew I saw something there!" Yun Buxiu huffed as he pointed out the handwriting, "Your disciple is up to no good. What is this, a marking?"

Jiang Yinghe's clothing could all be considered artifacts. If others wanted to write something or alter them in other ways, they had to add a layer of high-level restrictions first. But this restriction was not malicious in nature and had no impact on the durability of the robe.

He stared at the smoke-coloured words. His first reaction was amusement, Jun-er must have been very bored to resort to writing on his clothes. Just thinking about the scene made him smile lightly.

Then Jiang Yinghe couldn't help but laugh out loud before coughing twice. "I can't rein him in anymore. Qin Jun might seem steadfast, but then he turns around and does things like this...I don't even know what to say."

Yun Buxiu's eyes widened. "Don't you think you're too lenient with them? It's important to maintain a level of respect for their Shizun and the Dao..."

Before he could finish, the carriage's curtain was opened by Qin Jun. His steel-gray eyes looked over with an expression that was only half smiling.

"Yun-shishu," It was the first time he had called Yun Buxiu that. Qin Jun's smile sent chills down his spine as he asked, "Do you need more tea?"

Yun Buxiu felt a mysterious pressure on him. He swallowed reflexively. "...No. No need."

He only let out a breath when Qin Jun went back out. Yun Buxiu didn't know why he was this nervous. It was like he had been bitten by a snake and had a lingering fear of ropes.

"I did teach them properly." Jiang Yinghe said. "En, they're all grown up."

Yun Buxiu felt like he was talking to an old, sentimental father. He hesitated for a while before deciding to risk his life to say, "Did you see the new novel that the Lan Ling publishing house put out?"

"En?"

"The newest one. It's about a blackened disciple that transmigrated from another world. After he blackened, he overthrew his Shizun." Yun Buxiu was wearing a serious expression. "Then he imprisoned, shackled and forced him to do all sorts of wicked things..."

Jiang Yinghe: "...Too many stories can be bad for you."

Yun Buxiu knew he would react like this. He knocked back his tea like it was wine to try and drown his sorrows. He glumly said, "Jiang-shixiong, I really think you're in danger."

Unfortunately, Jiang Yinghe was a very stubborn man. His eldest disciple was willing to go to such lengths to protect the one he loved. His second was a straight man who knew what he wanted. There was no need to talk about his youngest, who was still so sticky even after he grew so much.

And...

Jiang Yinghe lightly sighed. "Chang Ye is my last disciple, I won't take in another disciple, especially a female. Relax."

Yun Buxiu: "...???...That's not what I meant!"

He flopped onto the low tea table in defeat as he looked at Jiang-shixiong's coldly beautiful features. He asked without much enthusiasm, "Have your injuries gotten any better?"

Jiang Yinghe nodded. "I'm fine, but I never thought that the next time I returned to Lan Ruo Temple would be to send off a monk cultivator I just met not long ago."

"They don't care about that." Yun Buxiu took a sip of his lukewarm tea. "It's more apt to call it 'looking to the future' rather than sending off the

deceased...More importantly, it's to discuss how to get back at that Devil Baron Jiuying for this grievance."

Chan Qing was in the midst of a test of mentality. Although he had the strength, he was powerless to act. This was the real reason that the various sects were sending their representatives to Lan Ruo Temple.

The cries of the cranes cleared the clouds in the sky. The incense burner to the side was lit, and its fragrant smoke slowly spread.

—-

Not only members from Peng Lai were headed to Lan Ruo Temple. Other major powers like Ying Zhou Sect, Yao Wang Valley and Guang Han Palace were also gathering there.

Hui Jing Canshi's remains were inside, guarded by the little monk he taught.

Jiang Yinghe looked on from outside for a long time. He came alone. The little monk that met him before at Yun City bowed politely to him but remained silent.

Maybe one day he, Jiang Yinghe would also meet his end like this. It was a common fate for practitioners of the Dao. Even that demonic cultivator from a thousand years ago with the heavenly demon physique who became a Half-step Golden Immortal was unable to escape his fate in the end.

Jiang Yinghe just wanted to go home, but the road there seemed to go on forever with no end in sight.

The first three centuries he became a cultivator, he spent every moment practicing the sword due to his strong desire to ascend and return. In the next three, he learned how to temper himself and his blade. His memories of his home grew hazier until they were indistinct. And now—

Jiang Yinghe finally became like a piece of jade, with a cold exterior and a warm interior. He had climbed to the summit of immortal cultivation where no one else has tread for millennia. But he still didn't know how to go

home. This long-held wish of his only saw some promise with the appearance of his disciples.

He was their saviour, the one who brought them into the light. But to Jiang Yinghe, they were the hope that he had been searching for.

Jiang Yinghe tidied his sleeves and was about to head to where the abbot was when he heard the crying of children.

"Chanshi...How did Chanshi fall into a deep meditation? ...Devils, do all devils eat people?"

"Those beasts are all man-eating monsters...Wuwu, I'll definitely kill them all in the future! There are no good devils in the world!"

Jiang Yinghe sighed after hearing those words. When he looked away, he noticed a beautiful youth standing nearby. It was Chang Ye.

"Did you come to find me?" Jiang Yinghe strode over and said in passing, "Let's go, Shizun has taken too long."

But Chang Ye took his hand and didn't move. He suddenly asked, "Does Shizun feel the same way?"

"What?"

"About devils." The seal on Chang Ye's head was softly glowing, and there was a slight smile on his lips as if he was just curious. "Do you think they're all bad?"

Jiang Yinghe rubbed Chang Ye's head. "Of course not."

With those words, the other person that was strung up like a tight string seemed to relax. He blinked at Jiang Yinghe and put his head in Jiang Yinghe's hand. "Is Shizun unhappy?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. "...Is it that obvious?"

"Yep." Chang Ye nodded sincerely. "Devil beasts can be obedient too, aren't some of them popular as pets? Shizun, do you like fluffy ones?"

Fluffy ones?

...Like...cats?

Jiang Yinghe recalled the white cat he had once raised. Then he snapped back to himself. This wasn't the time to be reminiscing about the past. He knocked on Chang Ye's forehead. "What kind of strange thoughts are running through that little head of yours all day? I'm going to talk about serious matters. Even if you don't want to listen in, stay in Lan Ruo Temple to reflect on yourself. You can't be this flighty forever."

Chang Ye obediently nodded and watched as Jiang Yinghe's black robe grew further away. The smile on his lips became cold.

Devil Baron Jiuying...

He flipped through the memories that had been sealed for many years before finding that name in an obscure corner...Based on the time they began to cultivate, Jiuying should be referring to him as an ancestor.

'What do I care what the world thinks of me?' Chang Ye took out Duanshe Li which was disguised as a flute from his waist. 'They're just ants in the dust beneath my feet.'

He only needs the approval of Shizun.

If that person likes him, accepts him, and was willing to be kind only to him...

Chang Ye closed his eyes and took in a deep breath.

The long and arduous first half of his life was spent on a furious battlefield filled with carnage, settling the never-ending internal conflicts between devil tribes. Now that he has woken up, all he wanted was to live by Shizun's side.

—-

Tian Muo School.

The faction that had remained divided for nearly a millennium experienced drastic changes recently. One by one the groups that had splintered off were dealt with; crushed beneath a shapeless yet unyielding hand that gathered the devils scattered like sand once again.

In just half a month, many infamous demonic cultivators were killed by one person with no more than a single strike.

But this new leader took great measures to conceal his identity. All who saw him were either dead or well on their way there.

Qiu Chou stepped over the severed limbs in front of the main palace of the Tian Muo School. There was too much flesh and viscera to avoid completely. He saw a blind lady in red standing before the curtain beaded with pearls at the entrance.

This blind lady in red had a red cloth covering her eyes and seemed to be fifteen or sixteen at most. It was said that she was a subordinate of the new leader that united the entire demonic faction.

The blind girl heard his footsteps and turned to greet him first. "Qiu-Mojun."

Qiu Chou nodded. "The soul-cleansing artifacts that the leader requested have all arrived."

The blind girl replied. "Very well. Qiu-Mojun, you've worked hard."

Qiu Chou did not leave immediately, instead asking belatedly, "Why are so many medicines for quelling internal demons necessary? Could it be..."

A sudden rush of demonic energy exploded from behind the pearl curtain and screen partition. An overwhelming current of sadistic rage slammed into Qiu Chou's bones.

Qiu Chou hurried to kneel on one knee. There was a slightly sweet and metallic taste in his mouth. He heard a deep voice from within.

"...Fuck off."

He immediately swallowed back the blood in his throat and his newfound fear, quietly leaving the palace.

Author's Corner:

Chang Ye: Why am I so excited when Shizun scolds me QAQ

HeHe: ...Pervert.

Sahl: Editor's small theatre—

Jiang Yinghe gets rep for sleeping around.

Chang Ye is secretly a trembling m?

Qin Jun putting his name on All. The. Things. (mostly Shizun).

I really miss Huanhan! Come back and join in the fun! And that last line... 😂

Rain: Confirming Chang Ye's m tendencies (ω<)☆

OceanofPDF.com

CH28 - THE ONLY LIGHT IN DARKNESS (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Lan Ruo Temple.

"Jiuying has forsaken the agreement." A blue-clothed female cultivator fumed, "He clearly signed a contract with humans, so how dare he attack a Chanshi?"

A Ying Zhou Sect cultivator added on, "Since the devils were the first to break their oath, we need not let ourselves be constrained by it either."

Further away from those two, a Yao Wang Valley Primordial God Zhenren sighed. "An eye for an eye will only make the world blind. If we fight, there would be untold casualties."

"Are you suggesting we let Jiuying get away with devouring the cultivation of a buddhist cultivator?!"

The discussion screeched to a halt as tempers flared. Abbot Chan Qing, who had refrained from getting involved thus far, coughed violently.

Everyone became quiet as they turned towards him, and the long silent Xuan Wei Xianjun beside him.

Based on age, it's true that Chan Qing was the senior here. However, he was unable to easily leave the monastery due to his test of mentality. The foremost offensive pressure of this operation would have to come from Jiang Xianjun.

"The unnecessary loss of life is not what I am after." Chan Qing said. "This old one has but one request of Xianjun."

Jiang Yinghe replied. "Please tell me."

"I would like for Xianjun to go as this old one's representative to renegotiate the treaty with Jiuying."

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment. "If he insists on remaining stubborn, this master will extract his devil core on behalf of the Abbot. I will do my best to minimize the destruction."

His words were too cold and decisive. The other Zhenrens that would be accompanying him couldn't help but shiver.

Chan Qing's eyes were half closed. Before he could reply, Qin Jun said from his place beside Jiang Yinghe, "I will go with Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe frowned. "You..."

That was all he managed to get out before the sound of a flute echoed in the temple. It sounded ordinary at first, even a bit choppy, but the sound gradually lengthened and became almost melodic as the howling of beasts joined in as accompaniment.

—It was the screams of devils!

Then, like an entire army was suddenly halted, the devils that surrounded Lan Ruo Temple were suppressed by the flute and could only kowtow and pray in its direction. Those that were of slightly higher cultivation were still only able to scream before falling to the ground.

Jiang Yinghe suddenly had a bad premonition. This flute seemed to only affect those of the devil race. It was...

Before he could analyze the melody for any hints, he heard a clamorous roar and then the sound of something gigantic breaking through the ceiling of the temple.

Everyone stepped back in alarm. The dust cleared to reveal a nine-headed beast snarling in front of Jiang Yinghe. Following a sharp note from the faraway flute, this foul creature was forced into its human form. His legs crashed into the ground, and his head was pushed down by an unseen force.

Jiang Yinghe was shocked. "Jiuying?"

Even in his human form, Jiuying still had beast markings on his savagely handsome face. He struggled defiantly a few times before being reigned in by an especially ear-piercing note. His throat continued to produce inhuman rumblings.

The cultivators assembled here were too stunned to speak. Only Qin Jun had a smile on his lips as he looked on at the archdevil kowtowing before them.

Jiuying was still dissatisfied and spoke out loud to an unknown person. "That baldy was rude to me, so of course I ate..."

The flute music stopped, and Jiuying spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, as if a tremendous pressure was pushing him to kneel motionlessly before Jiang Yinghe.

While Jiang Yinghe's mind was still in the clouds, Jiuying was forced to smash his head against the floor once. He spoke through gritted teeth, "This junior's cultivation is lacking. If it is your order, this junior must obey. But Your Majesty, if you've revived, why conceal yourself until now? Is there something worrying Your Majesty?"

The Devil King had revived?

Everyone drew in a cold breath. The scene before them was enough to scare them all silly. But...why does it seem like he's bowing before the wrong person? If he's really here to apologize, shouldn't it be to Chan Qing?

"As long as Your Majesty is here, it's only a matter of time before we rule the entire cultivation world! If you have someone you'd like..." Jiuying lifted his eyes, the red and blue marking on his face flashing intermittently

as he glared viciously at Jiang Yinghe. "Just give me a command, and this junior's subordinates will bring them unharmed to Your Majesty for you to play with however you'd like..."

His words seemed to touch a nerve, the melody that used to be carefree became piercing. The archdevil was crushed to the point where he could barely draw breath, letting out a high-pitched scream. His body levitated into the air, and a blue and red devil core the size of a pebble floated out from his forehead.

The devil core fractured in two as Jiuying began to scream in earnest. Half flew over to Jiang Yinghe while the other fell to the ground and rolled away.

The once mighty Devil Baron was now in so much pain that he wished he could faint already.

Jiang Yinghe accepted half the devil core, but he still had no idea what was going on. While he was lost, Chan Qing suddenly spoke from beside him. "Xianjun? This devil practitioner's punishment will be decided by my Lan Ruo Temple."

Jiang Yinghe reflected on this and said, "Of course."

Abbot Chan Qing swept his gaze over Qin Jun beside him before he warned Jiang Yinghe. "Since Jiuying was speaking with the revived Devil King, they likely have intentions towards Jiang Xianjun..."

He paused, then added, "Please be more careful, Xianjun."

Jiang Yinghe nodded, completely missing what Chan Qing was implying. He said in a serious tone, "This one welcomes a challenge. I will not act cowardly because of the malice of others, nor will I overestimate my own abilities."

When Chan Qing saw his determined expression, he thought back to when he had helped Peng Lai remove his passion root and was rendered speechless. He sighed, "Jiang Xianjun is really one of a kind."

How this matter was resolved in the end only concerned those of Lan Ruo Temple. Jiang Yinghe did not ask more.

But this half of the devil core... Jiang Yinghe held the crescent-shaped red and blue devil core in his hands for a long time. He finally connected the dots of what Jiuying was saying from the ground—that damned Devil King wanted to sleep with him!

But how is this possible? He was as straight as a light pole! Although his wet dream featured men...and only men confessed to him since he became a cultivator...and he still didn't have a girlfriend after so long...

Jiang Yinghe was less and less sure of himself. He fell into a state of deep contemplation while holding the crescent core. Why did he attract only men? Was his orientation somehow wrong?

Just as he was stuck in a loop, a lively voice came from beside his ear.

"Shizun!" Chang Ye didn't like to stand around listening to grown-ups talking, so he didn't accompany Jiang Yinghe to the meeting before. He finally returned to Jiang Yinghe's side now. "Is the discussion finished already?"

His dark eyes were bright as he slowly inched over. "When are we going to talk to the devils? Shizun, what's this..."

Chang Ye reached over to touch the little crescent in Jiang Yinghe's hand, but he changed his mind halfway and just grabbed his hand instead.

Jiang Yinghe's hand was very shapely, but his bones were lengthy and slender. Chang Ye's fingertip brushed over the back of his hand and softly flipped it over. His words were clear and innocent in nature.

"This is really pretty. I think it would look nice as part of a hairpin for Shizun." Chang Ye tilted his head and smiled. "Since Shizun is also pretty it'll definitely be a good match."

Jiang Yinghe, "...Nonsense."

There was no way he would describe himself as 'pretty', but for the sake of his little disciple he didn't outright deny it. He changed the subject. "Chang Ye, you've met Hui Jing Chanshi before. Do you feel anything different coming here today?"

Chang Ye paused and blinked his eyes. "What does Shizun want me to feel?"

Jiang Yinghe thought about it. "Feelings regarding...life and death?"

Chang Ye didn't reply directly. He looked at the other with clear eyes. "I can't feel anything like that."

"...You can't?"

Chang Ye nodded and buried himself in Shizun's chest. He softly said, "I only feel sad, jealous and angry when it involves Shizun. As for life and death, that's something that happens to other people. Their souls will enter the cycle of reincarnation again, so why does it matter?"

Chang Ye nuzzled even closer. "Only if it happens to Shizun will this disciple be...hurt."

Jiang Yinghe didn't know what to say. There was something very wrong with the other person's way of thinking. He sucked in a breath and asked, "Why?"

A knock at the door sounded before he could reply. A stranger spoke out.

"This one is Chou Yongzhou from Yao Wang valley. I heard that Xuan Wei Xianjun was searching for a way to heal the hand of his beloved disciple, so I have come to meet with you."

Jiang Yinghe didn't continue to correct his little disciple. "Ye-er, you should step out first."

Chang Ye nodded and reluctantly parted from Jiang Yinghe's lap to give his Shizun some space.

He immediately saw Qin Jun after he closed the door.

Qin Jun was staring at his half-bone limb. He glanced at his little shidi just in time to see that mask of innocence drop from his face. The fevered intensity in his eyes rose to the surface like a glacier.

"You're not pretending anymore?" Qin Jun nonchalantly asked. "Your fakeness was just disgusting."

Chang Ye leaned against the door and smiled at him. "But Shizun just happens to like me."

The bone hand that was relaxed clenched at that. Qin Jun looked up with the intent to kill in his steel-grey eyes. He forcefully suppressed it and instead shifted his gaze to the flute tied at Chang Ye's waist.

"Stepping all over his trust in you." Qin Jun said, "Don't regret it when you get nothing in the end."

The words seemed to strike a nerve in Chang Ye. The pair of eyes that were clear in front of Jiang Yinghe were now completely covered by darkness. His entire body was surrounded by a sickly, twisted aura.

"You dare to say that to me?" He glanced at Qin Jun's bone hand. His tone was derisive. "Speak for yourself."

Author's Corner:

"I would rather dive into the dust of worldly affairs for him, to be a person who could feel pain." —Lyrics from ' '

Rain: Chang Ye's not finished being naughty yet. Not by a long shot...

Sahl: Little Chang Ye flexing on his fellow disciple while blatantly propositioning his Shizun. Multitasking at its finest!

I've read everyone's lovely comments *waves* and I'm +1 Huanhan too!

OceanofPDF.com

CH29 - FOLLOW ME INTO THE NIGHT, MY LOVE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe poured himself a new cup of tea.

The tea was warm. It was Lan Ruo Temple's 'Morushui', a variety that had a very faint flavour.

"The situation is like this." Chou Yongzhou said from his seat across from him. "We at Yao Wang Valley know our own level of strength, which is why I was sent to meet with Xianjun. According to the legends, in Sword Saint Taichu's old residence, there is a medicine able to extract miasma and regrow the meridians."

He paused. "This junior heard that Xianjun has been worried about his beloved disciple for a long time, so why not join us on our expedition? Jiang Xianjun will have the first pick of all the treasure that we find."

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment. "Sword Saint Taichu? He was a Half-step Golden Immortal."

"Yes." Chou Yongzhou said, "Tens of thousands of years ago when the Devil Race reigned supreme, Sword Saint Taichu was the leader of the righteous faction. He was truly a force to be reckoned with in that dark part of our history. However, it has been a long time since his last appearance. It's a miracle we were able to discover his old residence."

"Old residence..." Jiang Yinghe considered it. "Will only people from your Yao Wang Valley be going?"

Chou Yongzhou nodded. "If Xianjun has any concerns, you can go together with any of the Zhenrens of Peng Lai."

This was a very dangerous task, so there was no way that Jiang Yinghe would easily risk his martial siblings. He thought about it for a long time before saying, "Qing Yan Zhenren Yun Buxiu and this master's second disciple will depart with your group."

It wasn't necessary for Xiao Yun-shidi and Jun-er to go in once they arrived at the old residence. At that time, if even he couldn't counter the formations that the Half-step Golden Immortal set, then those two would be risking their lives for nothing.

Chou Yongzhou was obviously overjoyed to hear this. He rose and bowed. "Many thanks to Xianjun."

He seemed to remember something. "Before, this junior was not very optimistic. After all, Yao Wang Valley could never compare to the other sects when it comes to matters like this. But due to the demonic faction's movements lately... We have no choice but to prepare in whatever ways we can."

Jiang Yinghe was startled. "The demonic faction?"

"The demonic faction is..." He reconsidered his choice of words. "The Tian Muo School has been reunited by an unknown demonic cultivator who is rumored to be as strong as the Xuehe Demon Lord from a thousand years ago."

"Yao Wang Valley's west division was able to find out that...Qiu Chou who rose to the Hollowed Cave stage three hundred years ago has led his forces to join under this new Demon Lord's banner."

Jiang Yinghe did not expect the situation to be so severe. He lightly frowned, "There's no further news of this new Demon Lord?"

Chou Yongzhou shook his head and said in a worried voice, "There's only one other piece of news. This Demon Lord seems to struggle with internal

demons since he sought out many heart-cleansing and soul-calming artifacts. For cultivators, no matter which road they follow, qi deviations...only lead to madness."

Qi deviations were different from falling to demonic temptation. Although the two were often used interchangeably, the latter was just a righteous cultivator becoming a demonic one. Qi deviations...actually involved having intrusive thoughts in your heart. It would greatly affect one's personality and rationality, and might lead to insanity.

"How was he able to unify the Tian Muo School so quickly while battling his internal demons?" Jiang Yinghe exclaimed, "Aren't they afraid that their Demon Lord will turn his blade inward if he loses control?"

Chou Yongzhou sighed, "I don't know the answer to that. Maybe this Demon Lord is just too strong."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. His mind automatically imagined a hulking brute with three heads and six arms who stank of blood...Just a very unflattering image overall. He shuddered and couldn't help but think that those demonic cultivators might be like pigs sent out to slaughter by their own new Demon Lord.

He was more certain the longer he thought about it—those who experienced qi deviation often became very frightening caricatures of themselves, regardless of their alignment to righteous or demonic cultivation.

Thank goodness Huanhan went into seclusion. Or else his heavenly demon physique would be an excellent supplement for this type of demonic cultivator.

Jiang Yinghe quietly celebrated his disciple's good fortune before saying, "Thank you for telling me. This master will bring the news back to Peng Lai so that our fellow comrades can have time to prepare."

Chong Yongzhou said, "It was my duty, think nothing of it. Although..."

The young man in light green shifted on his feet, a slightly nervous expression on his warm and kind face. He opened his mouth and said quietly after much hesitation, "This junior has a selfish request."

Jiang Yinghe, "Tell me."

"I..." Chou Yongzhou lowered his eyes and took a deep breath. He retrieved a peach-coloured jade sword pendant with a sleek tassel from his sleeve and presented it to Jiang Yinghe. He mustered up his courage to say, "Xianjun, please pass this on to Hun Yuan Xianjun."

...Tong Guiyu?

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He glanced at the white-knuckled grip of his hands and softly asked, "Why?"

Chou Yongzhou said, "This junior is...too timid."

Jiang Yinghe couldn't wrap his mind around it for quite some time. It was only when he saw the other person's slowly reddening ears that he realised his intentions. He didn't know what to say as he thought of Tong Guiyu's flippant nature and the Hongyan sword he wielded.

Hongyan was partial to beauties. The more beautiful the better. Tong Guiyu already possessed androgynous and comely features, not to mention that he was a disciple of He Huan. He dual cultivated from the very day he began his journey to immortality. He went through lovers like they were clothes and was overall not a not a very faithful cultivation partner.

And the Yao Wang Valley medicine cultivator before him had a pure and kind appearance with his heart on his sleeve. If the two of them were to really have a relationship, it would most likely end...tragically.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand to accept the sword pendant. "This master will pass this on for you, but whether he realises your intentions or not is a matter between the two of you."

Chou Yongzhou's entire body relaxed. He felt like he was dreaming as he nodded gratefully. "Many thanks to Jiang Xianjun. I have already prepared for the worst in my heart. But it is better to try and fail than to never try at all. If..."

He didn't go on and bowed deeply to Jiang Yinghe. The emerald ribbon in his hair shifted as if it was a willow branch swaying in the wind.

—-

Chang Ye whined and wheedled for many days to no avail. All he got for his efforts was an escort in the form of Xiao Yun-shidi.

In Jiang Yinghe's mind, Chang Ye's cultivation was just too low. Instead of something dangerous like this, it was better for little Chang Ye to study hard back at Peng Lai. No matter how long his youngest disciple acted spoiled, he stood firm on this decision. He even ditched Yun Buxiu as well so that he could accompany his little disciple back to the sect.

But he forgot one thing.

There were still some remnants of the Seven Days of Joy left. Since he would lose access to his cultivation during the night, he could only rest in the flying carriage with Jun-er watching over him.

This journey was not short. In order to not tire out his second disciple, Jiang Yinghe had already resolved to change his sleeping habits. At least while he was awake he could chat with Jun-er.

...But he still lost to his biological weakness in the end.

Jiang Yinghe's soft, black hair gently draped onto the edge of his light coloured robe. He held his head in one hand, and his loose collar shifted to reveal his white neck and slender collarbone.

He was just too tired. That pair of black eyes gradually closed, and the half-awake conversation with Qin Jun drifted to an end.

Qin Jun was sitting right beside him.

The crane-led carriage was very spacious. In order to match the speed of the people from Yao Wang Valley, this top-grade artifact was intentionally slowed.

A hand made of white bone slowly brushed back the loose strands of hair by Jiang Yinghe's ear. At the same time, Qin Jun's voice was very low and soft, like something precious and hard was being rubbed together. There was a barely repressed note of gentleness.

"Shizun?" He called out, "Are you tired?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't reply immediately, and it was indeed quite a while before he made a noise of agreement.

Qin Jun kept helping him deal with the side effects while also slowly untying his robe. "Then...do you want to rest now?"

Jiang Yinghe was silent. Qin Jun tightened his fingers and couldn't help but swallow. He pulled off his Shizun's outer layer.

This robe wasn't the one he had altered with words, but it was still filled with Shizun's cold fragrance. He tried to be quiet, but the components of his bone hand couldn't help but rub against each other and squeak from excitement.

Qin Jun's scent entered the fabric.

His body had a hard to describe sense of piercing cold that mingled with Jiang Yinghe's mellow scent. Qin Jun only realized how hot his breathing had become when he had half undressed the other person.

Hot air landed on his white skin, bringing a frown to Shizun's face.

Qin Jun had to take some time to press down his rapidly rising possessiveness and desire. He half-held his Shizun in his arms to finally take off that robe. He whispered into his ear, "Shizun, let's get on the bed."

Jiang Yinghe nodded drowsily. He managed to wake enough to touch the hot tips of his ears before shuffling over to the bed. He said with some guilt,

"If you're tired then come lie down for a while."

He was the senior that should be protecting them. Who would've thought that because of this damn aphrodisiac his disciple needed to watch over him. Plus Qin Jun was straight. There was nothing wrong with two straight men sleeping together. He couldn't have his precious disciple get too tired, right?

That's what Jiang Yinghe was thinking about as he patted the bed and snuggled under the covers. He hugged the blanket and curled into a ball.

His consciousness grew thin. A good Shizun like him was hard to find, so Jun-er must be very moved.

But Qin Jun...

Qin Jun didn't dare to move.

He glanced at Jiang Yinghe's exposed fingers. They were white and long, as if they were carved out of jade. They lightly grasped the bedding and unintentionally touched his heart.

Qin Jun sucked in a breath before looking at himself. He really couldn't control his feelings for him. They were filled with vigour and utterly shameless, his body even betrayed his eagerness with its jutting fullness.

He stared at Jiang Yinghe some more before actually climbing onto the bed. He clasped Shizun's wrist and intertwined their fingers.

After half an incense of time had passed, Qin Jun's voice was already overly hoarse. "Shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe was dead to the world. He didn't realize how dangerous his situation was and even shifted to reveal his previously hidden face.

Like a snowy plum blossom that just fell from its branch.

The flower landed on the innermost part of Qin Jun's heart.

Qin Jun's hands stopped by his Shizun's cheek. It retreated in the end, gliding over his sleek black hair. His gaze was focused on his body.

Qin Jun wrapped his arms around Jiang Yinghe's shoulders to slowly bring the other person to his chest. "Shizun..."

He can't call out that word anymore. If he kept saying it, he might just start rutting against him, rubbing that hard length against sleek, white skin. All he could do was use Jiang Yinghe's cold fragrance to cool down his burning body—

That was the wrong move. This scent made his already thin self-control begin to fray.

Qin Jun truly experienced what the phrase 'sweet torture' truly meant right now. He felt like he really couldn't hold on much longer. He wanted to lick the candy-like soul in his arms, but he planted a chaste kiss between Shizun's eyebrows instead.

He really didn't know what was wrong with him.

Qin Jun was born a wraith and the master of all ghost cultivators in the world. He had never been controlled or felt like he was less than dirt before. Three thousand years ago, those that offended him, regardless of their identity, would soon have met their demise at his hands.

Including the 'Dao' that hated him so.

Qin Jun emanated willfulness from the very depths of his bones. He was cruel, arrogant and selfish. All that he desired must belong to him.

He had never touched anything fragile or appreciated jade that would break apart under the slightest pressure. He's never felt his heart being roasted on an open fire before.

He only felt this way with the person in his arms.

Qin Jun stared at him for a long time until he truly calmed down and could suppress those deviant thoughts. Only then did he kiss him again.

...I don't know how to express my love without hurting you.

—-

The wavering light of the lamp was the only motion in the quiet night.

Jiang Yinghe was always drowsy after just waking up.

He slowly opened his eyes and was startled to discover the chest in front of him. His eyes shifted upward to meet Qin Jun's smiling gaze.

"...You," Jiang Yinghe paused, slightly confused, "did you sleepwalk?"

"No." Qin Jun lowered his head. "This disciple didn't sleep at all."

Jiang Yinghe was shocked into silence. He wouldn't dare to believe that he had rolled into his embrace himself. He then noticed something and frowned. "Then let go of me."

He gave him a look and saw Jun-er's claws slowly retract from his waist. He couldn't help but admonish him. "Were you using your teacher as a body pillow? Do you really need me to teach you how to respect the teacher and the Dao, Qin Jun?"

Jiang Yinghe was indulgent in every way towards his precious disciples and he could go for centuries without losing his temper with them. It was rare for him to use this kind of grumbling tone with them and even rarer to call out their full name.

He didn't notice that when he spoke that way that the other's grey eyes darkened several shades for a second, obscuring nearly all his emotions.

Jiang Yinghe didn't care whether Jun-er knew what a 'body pillow' was either. He went about his morning routine as usual before noticing the sudden jump in the progress bar. Whatever happened last night allowed the progress to increase to 80%.

He stared at the progress bar for a long time without coming up with an explanation for what could've happened. Just as he was about to realize that

maybe it was too self-centered to think of it as a measure of how well he was raising his students, he heard Jun-er's casual question.

"Shizun?" He looked up, "...Are you planning to change your sword pendant?"

Jiang Yinghe was befuddled. Maybe Jun-er saw the peach-coloured one from Chou Yongzhou sometime last night? "That one is meant for Tong Guiyu from an admirer of his. What about it?"

Qin Jun stood up and naturally took the peach wood comb from his hands. His smile was strange. "I thought that Shizun didn't like Li-shixiong's present... Or that a female cultivator had confessed to you."

Jiang Yinghe didn't get how he came to that conclusion. He sighed, "Would your Shizun be like this if there was a female cultivator blind enough to want me?"

Qin Jun paused while brushing his hair. He looked at him from the side. "If there was, I'd gouge her eyes out."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

...Something's not right here. Are we even having the same conversation?

Author's Corner:

HeHe: Not even one female cultivator likes me, I'm so sad!

Female Cultivator (while shivering): Living...living is more important...

Sahl: The author's note... 😂 Also, I kinda really wish (for the eleventy millionth time) that this was a harem novel and I am not normally a fan of them. Qin Jun, Chang Ye, how dare you act so appealing! *mumbles * making it hard for us on the sidelines here.

Rain: Another novel fallen victim to censorship... (_<)

OceanofPDF.com

CH30 - THE FIVE CORE VALUES OF SOCIALISM (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Tian Muo School.

Vivid scarlet drops slipped down Li Huanhan's toned arms as he soaked in a flowing pool of blood.

As he silently rested in the Blood Pond, the surface of his palm split open to reveal an eyeball.

"Master," Its voice was filled with fear. "Master, your internal demons are about to go berserk! If you keep thinking those thoughts you'll surely go mad! Even if you are a demonic cultivator..."

The Blood Shadow could only get out half its plea before it felt like it was being choked by a terrifying force. It panted and cried out miserably, "Xuehe Demon Lord! Li Huanhan! You might as well carve out your passion root! Is this how a demon is supposed to live? Why are you so desperate to endure?!"

It saw that Li Huanhan had no reaction, and its cries became more desperate. "It's one thing to get internal demons when your parents were both murdered and turned into puppets all those years ago. But this situation is just too much! Have you ever heard of a Heavenly Demon that didn't get hard whenever they want?! Forcing yourself to abstain and be purehearted like this...you might as well become a monk!"

It suddenly let out an ear-splitting shriek and stopped talking. The eyeball stared fearfully towards its host.

Li Huanhan slowly opened his eyes. "Have you said enough?"

The Blood Shadow shrunk deeper into his hand, afraid to say a single word more.

In truth, the Blood Shadow was one of his internal demons, born from his youth spent crawling out of the Nine Layers of Hell. It has witnessed his weaknesses, his regrets and his most vulnerable moments.

Li Huanhan has led a blood-stained life.

The Blood Shadow couldn't help but sigh. "Demonic cultivation suits you much better than the route of immortals. Master, why don't you renounce that part of your foundation? It's of no use anyway..."

It saw Li Huanhan's gaze sweep over and immediately stopped, afraid it had said something wrong.

Li Huanhan tightly clenched his fist, and the Blood Shadow reluctantly withdrew. He re-dressed himself in his black robes and stood by the Blood Pond staring at the multitude of heart-cleansing artifacts and a bottle of calming medicine before him. His red gaze was calm.

Only he knew what his internal demons actually were.

Li Huanhan ran his hand over the artifacts and medicine before him, and they all began to weaken rapidly and disintegrate into dust.

The remains rained down from between his fingertips, the priceless treasures all rendered worthless.

Li Huanhan withdrew his hand as the temperature of his gaze dropped. Even with so many ways to cleanse his heart at his disposal, he remained trapped in the memories of that night.

As soon as he closed his eyes, his mind was filled with Shizun. From the first time he stood before him to—

To that night when Jiang Yinghe was writhing and panting. The corners of his eyes were wet from tears forced out from desire. His icy foundation was unable to endure the flames of passion. His consciousness drifted in and out like he was injured. He unknowingly leaned on the body next to him.

Li Huanhan could still hear the moans and sobs emanating from his throat. He could also still feel the way Jiang Yinghe's body felt as it ground against his own. A sensual and moving creature had peeked out from his Shizun's cold and distant facade.

The Shizun who made him worry just by frowning abandoned his frosty demeanor. He revealed the layers of his personality one by one as he struggled to stay afloat in a sea of pleasure. Without warning, he grabbed onto Li Huanhan's sleeves of his own volition.

—Even if he was made of stone, he would be aroused by the hot neediness of Shizun's touch.

He wasn't an upright gentleman nor a caring person. He wasn't attentive enough and had no sense of compassion for others. Li Huanhan felt like he was a tightly wound string being stretched to the breaking point between his instinct and desire to be a person of merit in Shizun's eyes.

The possessiveness and desire to monopolize that he had hidden away in his fragile psyche were unearthed from just one pleading touch by this person.

His brittle control had snapped. With trembling fingers he stroked the jadeite skin—like ice so cold it burned. Parting Shizun's robes, he followed the path of muscle, toned through a millennium of sword practice, down to the pants clinging damply to the narrow hips. Before his mind could catch up with his hand, he'd opened the tie and taken the heated length into his palm, stroking and rubbing. Moans and pleas filled his ears and the hardness in his palm grew slippery and slick until his Shizun had erupted.

Ears ringing with the sounds of Shizun's cries, his own body painfully erect, he'd cleaned up the mess they'd made. And at this time Jiang Yinghe, who had been comforted by his disciple's hand, was happily dozing off. Although his mind was still cloudy, at least he'd been able to release his pent up frustrations and was able to rest at last.

He has absolutely no memory of the events that took place afterwards. He didn't remember the way that slightly cool hand held him tightly and brushed over his cheeks and ears and the edges of his hair. He also didn't know how the other treated him as if he was a priceless treasure as he carefully planted a soft, yet passionate kiss on his lips.

Which is why he definitely didn't remember what he'd absentmindedly said after that secret kiss.

"Ye-er, don't be naughty..."

It was like freezing water had been poured over him.

His internal demons climbed their way into his heart, drawing blood as they latched on.

The struggle to not immediately murder Chang Ye and forcibly take Jiang Yinghe back to the Tian Muo School was all Li Huanhan could think about as he left. This internal demon was much more relentless than the Blood Shadow, constantly reveling in his agony and suppressing his already fractured rationality.

It seemed that he wasn't able to be special in Shizun's heart or his bed—the springtime of humans was indeed ephemeral and brief.

Li Huanhan opened his eyes and sighed deeply. At the same time, the beaded curtain made a sound as the blind girl in red entered. "Master, Chou-Mojun just sent word that Yao Wang Valley has discovered the old residence of Sword Saint Taichu."

"En."

"They...encountered Xuan Wei Xianjun and were able to convince him somehow to accompany them there."

Li Huanhan snapped his head up, a dark look in his eyes. "Where?"

The blind lady replied, "Above Yao Wang Valley's territory in the south."

Li Huanhan nodded stiffly and made a gesture with his hands. The girl in red standing before him bowed and returned to Li Huanhan's hand in the form of the blood-red Jimie sword. Several restrictions had already been lifted from the sword, but the most important one was still active. This correlated with the blindness of the young girl.

He hastily set out, leaving behind the dissonant sounds of the swaying curtain.

—-

On the other side, the first thing Jiang Yinghe and his companions saw as they approached the residence was an ancient stone plaque.

To be more specific, they hadn't reached the residence proper yet. This plaque seemed to function as a sign of sorts.

Jiang Yinghe came closer and noticed a thick layer of dust on the stone. He used a cleansing art to get rid of the impurities obscuring the plaque.

The true appearance of the stone was revealed. Jiang Yinghe originally meant to glance over it. But he was driven into a state of shock from its contents and could only stare blankly at it.

This world used a form of writing similar to seals, but with some even harder-to-interpret words. But the language carved onto the stone...was modern simplified Chinese.

Jiang Yinghe felt his heart skip a beat. His first thought was, 'Am I not the only transmigrator? Was this Sword Saint one as well?'

The people around him were unable to understand, so he was reluctant to spend too much time on it. He quickly glanced over it to see that it read,

"If people in the future can understand what I'm writing, then you need to be careful. Try to remain calm when facing a small dark room. There's no point in getting worked up over it."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

He continued to read downwards and saw a smaller line engraved underneath.

"The password incantation to open the door is the twenty-four words describing the five core values of socialism. Please recite them once through."

Jiang Yinghe: "...Was this guy a civics teacher before crossing over? What's wrong with him?"

He couldn't help but complain a little under his breath. Only Qin Jun who was beside him heard his muttering. He turned and quietly asked, "Shizun, what did you say just now?"

"Nothing." Jiang Yinghe adjusted his emotions. He wondered if this senior had anticipated his arrival and left him this message.

He was preoccupied by this matter, so it wasn't until they had arrived at the front gate that he focused on what was in front of him.

"We have scouted out the main entrance previously." Chou Yongzhou said. "It seems to be difficult to open with force due to the multiple restrictions placed on it. Jiang Xianjun..."

He saw Jiang Yinghe step up and recite twelve phrases with a blank expression.

Afterwards, the sturdy doors jolted, and the restrictions placed on them turned to allow the two sides to open.

Chou Yongzhou was speechless. The admiration and venerance he held for the elegant Jiang Yinghe in his heart rose dramatically. He couldn't help but ask, "Xianjun, how did..."

Jiang Yinghe: "...I read about it in a historical record."

Chou Yongzhou had a serious demeanour. "May I ask which record? Maybe there is more information related to the defenses laid by Sword Saint Taichu that we can use to minimize our losses."

Jiang Yinghe glumly stared at him. " 'Five Worthwhile Approaches to Communist Values'. "

Not only Chou Yongzhou but the other Yao Wang Valley cultivators exclaimed their praises. "I've never heard of such a book. Jiang Xianjun is very well-read indeed!"

Jiang Yinghe: "...Your praise is too much."

His face wasn't thick enough for this, so he quickly led the others into the inner residence.

There weren't any terrible traps inside, nor anything suspicious. In fact, the most suspicious thing was that the supposed treasures left behind by this senior were nowhere to be seen.

It was just a simple manor inside. Jiang Yinghe entered and was instantly reminded of Earth by the decoration style. He mentally confirmed the identity of this Sword Saint as a fellow transmigrator.

He was most likely a senior that transmigrated before him that jokingly wrote those words on the stone plaque. He probably never thought that another person would trip on his way back from work and wake up here...The world truly acts in unpredictable ways.

Jiang Yinghe stepped over the first layer of arrays. The utensils inside were untouched by the marks of time. He suddenly noticed as he ventured

forward that everything here was in pairs. There were two cups on the table and even two sword mantles.

It was just that the sense of beauty of the person that decorated them was very twisted. The top part was a minimalistic style from Earth while the bottom was all bright and garish colours. It seemed like something his youngest disciple would like.

He walked closer and saw an open book beside the sword mantle. There was a sparkling bookmark there. On the back was a phrase still in simplified Chinese—

"Don't panic. Even if he locks you in a small dark room, he won't force you. No matter which one of him it is."

Jiang Yinghe was befuddled by these nonsensical messages. He was somewhat angry, but he had to suppress it and think calmly about this.

Was this an elaborate joke? Or did this person really predict the distant future? His future? Who was he referring to and how many of him were there?

He lightly sighed and was about to search elsewhere when there was a gasp from beside him.

Someone had triggered a hidden switch behind the sword mantle. The entire jade wall collapsed to reveal the shining bounty of artifacts and rare medications within.

A net of electricity also sprung up at the same time. Each arc sent cold sparks of light into the air. It was at least at the Hollowed Cave level.

Jiang Yinghe noticed a green bottle brimming with vitality on a table within. That was what he had come here for. He rose while instructing Jun-er. "Stay here. If anything goes wrong, leave immediately."

Qin Jun grabbed onto his arm and frowned. "Shizun has not yet recovered, this..."

Jiang Yinghe withdrew his sleeves without letting him finish. "If I find it difficult, then I will also leave."

He approached the net and lifted a hand. His spiritual energy sank in and began to slowly interact with the purple lighting guarding the treasure. It then proceeded with extreme caution into the light itself.

The sub-zero energy froze the net section by section. The entire process required the utmost concentration. Jiang Yinghe allowed his spiritual energy to completely surround the light before swiftly retracting his hand.

The mighty electric net became brittle ice and shattered into pieces beneath his fingers.

Just as Jiang Yinghe breathed a sigh of relief as he retrieved that green vial, a terrible premonition arose in his heart. He quickly looked up to see a mirror hung above the rest of the artifacts suddenly brighten. An immense and unavoidable pressure almost on the level of Half-step Golden Immortals erupted from within.

A sword light emerged from the mirror.

It flew out with startling speed towards Jiang Yinghe. Before he could react, a familiar figure pushed him to the ground and blocked the sword light for him.

It was Qin Jun.

—But there was no way Jun-er would be able to block a blow of this magnitude!

"Jun—" Jiang Yinghe only got out half a word before falling silent.

He stared at the scene before him in shock.

Qin Jun's body had not been pierced by the sword light, nor did he disintegrate under the intense pressure. He was completely fine under the light shining from the mirror.

Under this beam of light, the flesh and blood on Qin Jun's body began to dissolve and evaporate. In the end, even his bones had disappeared to reveal the soul underneath.

No. This wasn't a soul. This was the solid body of a wraith.

His body became less transparent by the second as it returned to his original appearance. The limitations of a human body fell away as an awe-inspiring amount of resentful energy and pressure began to emanate from him. The Zhanyun sword that had been sealed for a long time began to hum as its restrictions cleanly lifted one by one to reveal its original lustre and shape.

The sword that could defy the heavens finally showed its true form.

At the same time, Qin Jun's level of cultivation rose steadily from the Primordial God stage through the Hollowed Cave stage. Then it passed through the first, second and third tribulations along with the five tests of mentality. The air around him was so charged that it might explode any minute now.

It finally stopped just above the Half-step Golden Immortal stage, his true level.

Jiang Yinghe looked at him in shock. Those steel-gray eyes stared back.

His mind had completely stopped working.

In the long silence, only one Yao Wang Valley cultivator was able to stammer out, "I-isn't that mirror...the Sword Saint's Kanmi Mirror?!"

Author's Corner:

HeHe calm down, please calm down ah!!! Don't do something rash!!!

Rain: RIP Qin Jun... (́ ̀)

Sahl: Well then. Guess the jig is up for Qin Jun. Can the green vial fix a complete lack of body? Also, Li Huanhan's childhood! *sobs * Go rescue

Shizun and tie him to your bed, baby boy! Sword Saint Taichu is hilarious! (And obviously found his one true love.❣)

OceanofPDF.com

CH31 - ...LET ME GO (Draft)

Thank you Sadie Woods for the Ko-fi! ♥

Editor: Sahloknir

Qin Jun's long, silver-grey hair was blown around him as the miasma from his body exploded outward.

Jiang Yinghe could only stare mutely at the other person. He saw those eyes were helplessly looking at him as well. The embrace of a ghost cultivator was terribly cold, and not even a shred of life or movement could be felt from the part closest to their heart.

"You..." Jiang Yinghe was still in a state of disbelief. He struggled out of those arms and retreated half a step. His voice wavered slightly.

"You're a ghost cultivator."

His voice has always been as clear and cold as frost, but it now seemed like snow mixed with the blood and sweat he invested all these years. The complicated tone dropped into the silence between them.

His head was repeating the scene of Qin Jun shielding him just now as well as when his flesh melted away to reveal his true appearance as a wraith.

Jiang Yinghe opened his hand. The icy body of the Wangchen sword materialized in his palm. A bitterly cold sword light gleamed on its edge.

The surrounding Yao Wang Valley cultivators were stunned. All they could do was be afraid and not attract attention to themselves. There would be no way to escape from the genuine Half-step Golden Immortal before them.

Qin Jun stood in front of him. The Zhanyun sword at his side shook and hummed to express its pleasure at being unsealed.

Qin Jun's grey eyes were focused on him the entire time. It was only when he saw the sword appearing in Jiang Yinghe's hands that he hoarsely whispered, "Shizun..."

"Be quiet." Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath. Wangchen was so cold in his hand that he was almost frozen solid. He never imagined that the second disciple he had cared about for so long was actually such a high-level ghost cultivator!

Then what was the past two centuries? A trick by an evil being? A lie? Or was there some greater purpose that necessitated Qin Jun to lie in wait?

Jiang Yinghe's mind was a mess. He tried to calm down, saying his words precisely,, "I am not your Shizun. When have you ever put me in your eyes?"

"These many years and seasons that we've lived through, even if they are just lies. All this time... when have you put me in your eyes?"

"In Yun City when the ghosts were migrating, I pulled you out of a cocoon of miasma. I spent all of my time nurturing and protecting you over the last two hundred years..." Jiang Yinghe could not look at him, only at Wangchen's cold sword body in his hands. He couldn't go on. His last words were squeezed out in a low, tight voice.

It took immense effort for him to say, "Qin Jun. If it wasn't today, when were you planning to strike at me?"

The person across from him did not reply.

So this was what it felt like to have Shizun refer to him by his whole name... Qin Jun stared at the snow sword Wangchen in Jiang Yinghe's hands. He took a step forward. All the resentful energy on his body was suppressed, as if it had never been there in the first place.

"This disciple had never considered such a thing."

His voice was still as quiet as it used to be—as if he held onto a shred of hope that everything could go back to normal. Qin Jun glanced up at the other person's face. He saw the flawlessly white corners of Shizun's eyes start to turn red. He couldn't see it before, but after he approached, that faint hint of red began to spread. It was like Jiang Yinghe would begin to weep at any moment.

He didn't dare to get closer. He could only repress his anxiousness and try to explain. "This disciple has only had Shizun since emerging from the cocoon in this life. I would never hurt Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe had not noticed the tears gathering in his eyes. His hands were cold and he felt a stabbing pain in his heart, but only for an instant. It was as if his emotions became capped upon reaching a certain threshold. He remained stuck there—in immense and unbearable agony.

"These words," Jiang Yinghe said, "are they truth or lies?"

His voice was lost in the old residence and echoed once. The person he was talking to could barely breathe.

Jiang Yinghe closed his eyes. His mind was in complete disarray as he struggled to keep some semblance of calm. There was no time to consider whether he could find another genius approved by the system after losing Qin Jun. Right now, if this matter wasn't resolved correctly, the currently peaceful cultivation world would once again be thrown into chaos.

Qin Jun's identity was just too apparent. A Half-step Golden Immortal ghost cultivator that was revived from a cocoon. Who could it be other than that Spirit Patriarch from three thousand years ago? Moreover, this once infamous cultivator might take out his rage on others after being exposed so suddenly.

Jiang Yinghe loosened his grip and pierced Wangchen into the ground, leaning heavily on the sword. "Leave."

Qin Jun startled, as if he couldn't believe what he was hearing.

"Our relationship was a farce from the beginning. Since you say you don't plan on acting against me and you've had your fun, leave." Jiang Yinghe finished speaking and choked back the soft sobs that threatened to escape his throat. He struggled to maintain an unaffected demeanour. "From now on the two of us will be mere strangers to each other."

"When did I agree to that?"

Qin Jun tightly clenched his fist. The restlessness and rage evil cultivators were known for flashed through his eyes. It was as if the most vulnerable and fearful part of his heart had been trod on. A fearsome wrath leaked from his entire body. He couldn't help but blurt out, "Shizun, don't be like this with me. I want to remain at your side..." but afterward he ruthlessly suppressed himself once again.

His words had no effect.

Jiang Yinghe drew his sword backhandedly and glanced at Qin Jun before leaving for the entrance. After only a few steps, he discovered the originally clear sky had instantly turned from day to night.

On closer inspection, it wasn't night but an endless sea of wandering spirits and resentful ghosts mingling together and obscuring the sun. Below them were countless waves of ghost cultivators who had obtained a solid form. Among them were many that had achieved at least the Nascent Soul stage. Their presence surrounding this place made it seem like hell on earth.

Ghost cultivators resided below ground, on the opposite face of this world. Those that were unable to enter the cycle of reincarnation after dying would all go to the reverse world. It was referred to as the 'Ghost City' or the 'Nether Realm'.

The Nascent Soul ghost cultivators that obtained both a solid body and consciousness all kneeled outside. Their unified voice was enough to shake the heavens. "The Nether Realm has spoken, we await the orders of the Patriarch–"

Jiang Yinghe stopped in front of the endless mass of darkness. He heard Qin Jun's low and hoarse voice from behind him.

"Shizun." He recited the word with the same inflection as always, but something broke through his endless restraint to reveal his true, heated desire. "Stay by my side."

When Jiang Yinghe remained silent, Qin Jun continued, "If you stay by my side and return with me, I will let these Yao Wang Valley cultivators go."

Jiang Yinghe clenched his sword-wielding arm with his other hand. He was angry enough to want to run him through. But Qin Jun was a wraith, so he wouldn't bleed, even if his physical form was pierced. This was the only reason he restrained himself, but his emotions still leaked through his clenched teeth. "...Ungrateful wretch."

"Otherwise," Qin Jun didn't even blink as he stared intently at him, "even if I don't lift a hand, these people will all die here."

He approached and covered the back of Jiang Yinghe's sword-wielding hand with his own. His voice was quiet and slow. "Shizun, I won't harm you. I just need you to stay by this disciple's side. Don't leave me."

Jiang Yinghe didn't even know how to repudiate him anymore. He slowly caught his breath before he was able to slightly calm down. He turned to speak to Chou Yongzhou. "If you return, do not inform my Zhangmen-shixiong. This situation was caused by a lapse of judgement on my part."

He paused, then continued. "If my Shixiong asks, tell him that Jun-er and I are going on an indefinite journey...I'm afraid I can no longer pass on that sword pendant for you."

Jiang Yinghe had thought this through in a split second. If Qin Jun only had this one request, then it was the safest for everyone if he stayed for now. These righteous cultivators from Yao Wang Valley were unlikely to object. Now was not the time to let tempers flare...not while they were at such a disadvantage.

He took out that peach-coloured sword pendant from his sleeve and returned it to Chou Yongzhou before looking around. He said to Qin Jun. "Asking the Patriarch to open a path in the surrounding ghosts."

The words were cold, as if this was who Jiang Yinghe really was all along. As if he was, from top to bottom, the icy frost under the moonlight—radiating a sub-zero chill.

But Qin Jun knew there was another side to him. Towards him, Shizun has always been incomparably mild and temperate. He even appeared personable and indulgent when admonishing him.

It was like a block of steel had crushed his heart. It was so heavy that it sent all his uncountable hopes and dreams crashing into an endless abyss.

He shakily waved his hand and parted the millions of ghosts surrounding the area. A ray of sunshine shone through, leaving a single safe passageway.

In front of his astonished and silent compatriots, the green-clad Chou Yongzhou accepted the sword pendant and bowed deeply to Jiang Yinghe. "Please take care, Xianjun. Do not give up, no matter what may happen." He stared pointedly at Qin Jun.

Jiang Yinghe obviously did not understand his meaning. His heartache gradually eased as he forced himself to consider the Patriarch's motives. He was only able to come to the conclusion that Qin Jun still wanted to toy with him. He could think of no other reasons. In his mind, Qin Jun was still as straight as an arrow, so even though he'd sensed some odd desire in the other's voice earlier, since he was a man, nothing would happen.

But Chou Yongzhou thought differently. Jiang Yinghe's ice spiritual root and his high level of cultivation made him an ideal furnace to many evil cultivators... He heard that ghost cultivators could extract and eat the soul. This, along with the Patriarch's heated gaze towards him, probably meant that Xuan Wei Xianjun's body was about to be stained by the lusts of his former disciple.

Jiang Yinghe didn't know what he was talking about, but that didn't stop him from answering vaguely. "I know. You should all go."

After Chou Yongzhou stood, every one of the Yao Wang Valley cultivators saluted in Xuan Wei Xianjun's direction before leaving. They said no words. Their heavy expressions told enough.

The road that Qin Jun had opened was very narrow. On their way out of the old residence, the resentful ghosts on either side of them were practically drooling. But since their Patriarch was near, no one dared to do anything.

The atmosphere became even more stagnant after they had left.

Jiang Yinghe stood where he was. He withdrew Wangchen to his personal dimension to prevent the sword from ringing out.

He sighed. "Patriarch, why must you..."

He only said so much before being stopped by Qin Jun. The hand that was covering Jiang Yinghe's turned to tightly interlace their fingers.

Qin Jun embraced him from behind. His chin was resting on Jiang Yinghe's shoulder and he sucked in a deep breath against his neck. His voice became even more raspy.

"Don't call me that..." The end of his sentence was drawn out. "Address me the way you did before, alright?"

Jiang Yinghe had his hand and waist held by him, which left him speechless. He was exasperated as he turned his head. "Are all you evil cultivators so eager to make mischief? You insist on playing your role even after being exposed?"

Qin Jun's only answer was to hold him tighter. Jiang Yinghe could feel the residual warmth on his palm.

"Shizun," He continued, his voice hinting at a loss of control, "call me Jun-er, okay?"

Although it was phrased as a question, the end gave off a feeling approaching the paranoia of the mentally insane. Alarm bells went off in Jiang Yinghe's head, and he agreeably said, "Alright...Jun-er."

The person beside him immediately calmed down a lot. Jiang Yinghe breathed a sigh of relief in his heart. He then heard Qin Jun's quiet question.

"Were you...truly sad just now?"

Jiang Yinghe sighed, "Yes, I was about to keel over with grief... Let go of me."

Any more and he would start bawling.

It was only after Jiang Yinghe struggled for a bit that Qin Jun reluctantly let him go. He saw Jiang Yinghe turn to stare at him with those inky black eyes.

He slowly looked over Qin Jun before saying, "...I once expressed my admiration of you to your face. That, and the matter today are the same. They were both caused by my preconceptions, my inability to see the forest for the trees. Who would have thought the Spirit Patriarch that I admired was right in front of me this whole time."

"Shizun..."

Jiang Yinghe didn't reproach him for calling him that. He instead rubbed in between his eyebrows. "If you aren't trying to take me out, are you coveting the other righteous immortals? What of the female cultivator of the same sect as you that you admire, is she real or another one of your lies? Is there someone else?"

Qin Jun steadily looked at him and got closer. He replied, "I do admire someone in my heart. As for the righteous immortals...If Shizun wishes to protect them, then Jun-er wouldn't make the first move."

How can Jiang Yinghe easily believe his bullshit again? "Then what are you going to do with me?"

Qin Jun stared into his eyes. Every word was carefully announced. "We are returning to the Nether Realm to get married."

WTF? Get...married?

Jiang Yinghe was completely blindsided. For some reason, the first reaction he had to this was that Qin Jun tired of their charade as master and disciple after being exposed and wanted to act out being cultivation partners instead. Why the Patriarch felt they needed to get married too was beyond his understanding.

"You, you..." Jiang Yinghe paused, before continuing with anger in his voice, "Then what about the young lady that you like?"

Qin Jun: "I don't like women..."

"...So your so-called admiration and love was just a joke to you in the end." Jiang Yinghe couldn't control himself after hearing the words 'don't like'. His voice deepened as he spat out, "What a scum of a casanova you are!"

Qin Jun: "...What's a casanova?"

—-

By the time Li Huanhan rushed over, the originally pristine residence of the Sword Saint was in tatters. Everywhere was a mess, and the entire area was tainted by rolling miasma.

The black sleeves of his robe were picked up by the wind. There was a dark shadow in his blood-red eyes as he surveyed the surroundings. His grip on the Jimie sword trembled from how tightly he was holding it, and a piercing red sword light was visible.

He couldn't find any trace of them. Only the abundant resentful energy remained.

He was one step too late.

Li Huanhan had no faith in Qin Jun's character. Who knows where that bastard took Shizun. The sound of a flute suddenly came from the previously silent roof of the residence.

Li Huanhan snapped his head up to see a beautiful youth dressed in red sitting on the top of the wooden pillar. His clothes were reminiscent of the scattered sunlight that passed through a layer of clouds.

Chang Ye stopped playing his flute when he sensed a strong killing intent from the other's gaze. He smiled, "Long time no see, Li-shixiong."

Li Huanhan made no move to answer.

"Qin-shixiong...should have most likely taken Shizun to the Nether Realm." Chang Ye caressed the emerald flute in his hands. "I just happened to catch a glimpse of an army of ghosts returning to the Nether Realm when I arrived. Unfortunately, I can't win against Qin-shixiong right now."

He tapped the flute against his palm a few times. Li Huanhan glared at him before turning into a wisp of light and hurrying to the Nether Realm.

Chang Ye watched him leave with glittering eyes. It was impossible to tell what he was thinking, even the upturned angle of his lips was somewhat deceitful.

He reached out a hand to brush over the saber tied at his waist, speaking out loud to himself. "...Shizun will only like me. I'm the most obedient and cute after all."

A soundless wind blew over. Chang Ye was calculating how much time had passed before he seemed to suddenly remember something and laugh.

"Sorry, Xiao Yun-shishu."

On the other side, Yun Buxiu who agreed to accompany Chang Ye back to Peng Lai woke up in a daze. The youth in red who was originally drinking wine with him was nowhere to be seen.

He startled and thought he was still dreaming. Then he saw a tall devil wearing a fur coat walk over. There was a pair of prominent tiger ears visible on his head as he came over to sniff him. The aura of a Primordial God level devil cultivator surrounded him.

Yun Buxiu: "..."

Yun Buxiu didn't dare to move.

He soon heard the other's rough and low voice.

"You're fucked. Your Shizhi married you to me."

Yun Buxiu: "???"

Author's Corner:

HeHe: Fuck, my disciple's an evil cultivator!

Yun Buxiu: Fuck! Your disciple's married me off!

The martial brothers experiencing tragedy.

Rain: Author, you can't make me cry and then make me laugh! I'm going to get an aneurysm at this rate!!

Sahl: All the Feels for our second disciple this time—these boys! Jun-er, I — * forcefully hugs Patriarch and gives pats on head *

Meanwhile: Chang Ye—I'm the cutest, so Shizun will of course like me over those other stinky brats...

Me: Um. That's not how this works, child.

OceanofPDF.com

CH32 - YOU BASTARD (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe quickly discovered that he was wrong.

This bastard was really intending to marry him! He'd even got a matrimonial home and the vows ready to go!

This absolutely wasn't a joke... However, everything other than this, were just lies.

Jiang Yinghe was seated on the soft bedding of the 'matrimonial' suite. He glanced at the dark sky outside, then down at the light blue lamp beside him.

The palace hall of the Patriarch was spacious and filled with carved illustrations depicting spirit deities and the ghost migration. The lamps were all lit with wildfire, which were cold to the touch. Other than a few servant spirits, it was completely quiet here.

Jiang Yinghe sighed. It felt like he wasn't far off from being locked in a small, dark room. He was just missing the chains, torture instruments and whips...stuff like that. How did a clean and moral Shizun like him end up here?!

He raised the gauze curtain draped around the bed. By the nearby lamp, he was able to see several books on a bookshelf. He chose one at random and read its title, 'Overview of Ghost Cultivators in the Nether Realm'.

...Huh?

It gave off a feeling as though looking through Wikipedia...Jiang Yinghe flipped it open to see detailed entries on different types of ghost cultivators.

From Earthbound Spirits and Glutton Ghosts...to the Yaksha and Rakshasa. There were diagrams, pictures and even tips on the most suitable cultivation practices for each species. After reading through half of it, Jiang Yinghe noticed that every entry had a notice written at the bottom, 'Consuming a high-quality soul can advance cultivation'.

Jiang Yinghe's hands paused, and a feeling of danger arose in his heart. He flipped forward a few pages to find the tips for consuming souls.

Jiang Yinghe felt a chill run down his spine as he reflexively closed the book, His mind ran off the rails. After a round of deductions, he came to 'the truth'.

...Was Qin Jun planning on eating his soul while doing that...?

He thought that his pride as a man was the only thing that would be hurt. He never imagined that his life might be in danger as well. So, the other person lurked at his side this whole time in order to lull him into a false sense of security. All while planning to eat him?

Jiang Yinghe stared blankly at the facts laid out before him. He really was a failure in this life, wasn't he? He tried his best to raise his disciple into a model cultivator of the next generation, all the while blind to his intentions. What deep master-disciple bond? It was just his wishful thinking.

The last ember of hope was about to be extinguished in his heart. He suddenly felt very wronged and the urge to cry welled up again. His chest felt stuffy and weighed down.

At this time, a familiar deep voice sounded from beside his ear. Qin Jun's presence surrounded him as he embraced him from behind.

"Shizun...what are you looking at?"

Ever since this motherfucker recovered his cultivation, Jiang Yinghe had been unable to detect his footsteps anymore. He was lifted from the bed by those arms. They held onto his waist tightly.

He returned the book to where he had found it and let out a deep sigh. He emotionlessly said, "Nothing much."

Qin Jun sensed his attitude, but there was nothing he could do other than to soften his own. "Shizun, I don't like any female cultivators. The person I've always liked from the beginning has been you."

Jiang Yinghe was too furious and upset right now to bother with his antics. This was just another scheme meant to deceive him. He shook off his embrace and said with a cold expression. "It is in the nature of ghosts to be deceitful. Which words from the Patriarch's mouth should I trust?"

He knew that Qin Jun didn't like to be referred to that way, but his emotions got the better of him. He couldn't resist admonishing him some more. "If you have ever truly valued our relationship in the past, then let me go. And stay away from me..."

Wraiths didn't have a real body made of flesh, they were a soul given solid form. But those words were like a serrated knife that plunged into Qin Jun's most tender parts.

How could he stay away? How could he possibly stay away? He only felt love and kindness at Shizun's side, but now Shizun was threatening to take all that warmth from him.

Qin Jun's suppressed emotions were about to overflow. His already sensitive mental state was set ablaze by these words. There was a fire raging in his heart.

"No," His voice was guttural, "don't go."

If Jiang Yinghe could leave he would've gone already. He took a calming breath and restrained himself. Suddenly his hand was caught by the other and he was pressed onto the bed.

Jiang Yinghe, '!'

Wait, wait a minute. Is my questionable sexual orientation about to be forcefully bent? No—even if it has to be like this, you've got to give me some time to think it over...right? He's going to eat me now?! Can't he wait a bit?!?

The other person gripped his hand tightly. He secured both of Jiang Yinghe's wrists above his head. There was a truly frightening aura radiating from his body.

Jiang Yinghe struggled but to no avail. He then felt a soft silk ribbon bind his hands together. His scummy disciple then pressed down on his shoulders. His breath was loud and erratic.

"Shizun..."

He only called out once, soft and hoarse.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to hear what he would say next, but then he was suddenly kissed. His lips were touched by another pair.

Jiang Yinghe slowly widened his eyes. His brain that had been single for many years went into a state of shock. The other person penetrated his mouth, played with his tongue and sucked and rubbed at his lips.

He had no idea how to respond to being kissed. He even forgot how to breath. Qin Jun pressed the erotic kiss upon him for a long time. Long enough that the corners of his eyes turned red and his ears became inflamed to the touch.

At the same time, the wronged feeling in Jiang Yinghe's heart reached a new peak—How could a student do this to their teacher?! Calling me Shizun all day while daydreaming about me roleplaying as his lover. What a bullying scumbag!

He roughly jerked at the ribbon securing his hands. It became looser after a few more tugs. He quickly pushed Qin Jun away and slapped him across the

face before his brain could catch up.

The crisp sound echoed in the wide palace. The ghost cultivators outside did not move or make any sounds, as if they hadn't heard anything.

Jiang Yinghe's hair had come loose, and his clothes were a mess thanks to the other person's licentious hands, which had been busy pulling at them in order to touch the jade-like flesh underneath. His lips were slightly swollen, and his inky black eyes held back tears.

He wiped his lips and cursed. "You brute."

Jiang Yinghe didn't care about the consequences of angering Qin Jun— What could he do other than murder him? You could kill a man, but you couldn't take away his dignity. Plus, this was complete blasphemy against his teaching qualifications!

He could only regain his calm after quite some time. Only then did he want to glance at Qin Jun's reaction. Just as he looked up, the other person hugged him again.

The action was identical to the way that he blocked the sword light from the mirror. It's amazing how his perspective had changed in the past couple of days.

Jiang Yinghe was too tired to continue being angry with him. He allowed the other person to continue to hold him. He heard a raspy voice by his ear.

"Shizun...we need to alleviate the effects of the medicine."

Jiang Yinghe was reminded by his words that the remnants of the 'Seven Days of Joy' would be effective for one more day. He needed to control his desires and let someone cleanse the remaining parts from his body.

Qin Jun placed his head on his Shizun's shoulder and breathed in deeply before letting go. He placed the bracelet artifact on his wrist.

Normally, Jiang Yinghe would be tired by now. But too much had happened in the past two days, which has kept him awake. In addition, the Nether

Realm was in a state of constant darkness, so his sleep cycle was thrown way off.

He saw Qin Jun place the bracelet on his wrist.

Due to the absurd disparity between their abilities, the inability to access his cultivation was like dropping from 5 attack points to 0. It really made no difference in front of a Half-step Golden Immortal.

Qin Jun didn't remove his hand afterwards. He slowly grasped Shizun's soft and slender fingers in his palm. "What do Li Huanhan and Chang Ye mean to you?"

Jiang Yinghe sent him a look. "Naturally they're my disciples."

Qin Jun stared at him meaningfully. He was almost empathetic to their plight. However, he said, "Don't trust them."

Jiang Yinghe was a bit surprised, "What do you mean by that?"

"I'm saying that..."

Just as Qin Jun opened his mouth, his words were interpreted by an earth-shattering commotion outside. He lifted his head as deafening explosions sounded. The Nether Realm was thrown into complete disarray as countless ghosts rose up.

Over the horizon, a cold voice crossed over thousands of miles.

"Qin Jun—!"

It was Li Huanhan's voice.

"Get out here you son of a bitch!"

Qin Jun could detect, using his sixth sense, a shadow encased in heavenly demonic energy standing in midair. His dark robes were tattered, and the desire to kill was in his eyes.

Beneath his sword, the flow of the river in the Nether Realm had reversed. The previously dormant ghost cultivators screamed a thundering and fearsome warcry as they approached him.

Li Huanhan remained steadfast.

Qin Jun's expression remained the same. He leisurely adjusted Jiang Yinghe's clothing before covering his eyes with the ribbon which had previously been tied around his wrists.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback when he found he couldn't remove it from his face. He could hear a racket coming from outside, so he hurried to ask, "Is Huanhan out there? Wait, you—"

A finger against his lips silenced him. Qin Jun radiated a dark and suppressed aura.

"Shizun, don't speak his name."

Jiang Yinghe felt a sense of danger from his words so he subconsciously stopped trying to speak. He then felt Qin Jun rise with the Zhanyun sword in his hands.

—The matchup was clearly unfair. Even if everything went well during Li Huanhan's seclusion, he was up against a Half-step Golden Immortal!

Jiang Yinghe's anxiety overflowed and he couldn't help but call out. "Patriarch...Jun-er!"

Qin Jun's steps came to a sudden halt.

Jiang Yinghe said: "You...don't hurt him."

His voice clearly revealed his worry.

Don't hurt him...

Qin Jun closed his eyes and breathed out sullenly. His heart was right in Jiang Yinghe's hands, free to be pierced by his every action. His Shizun had

taught a wraith like him, lacking blood or flesh, the meaning of pain.

Only through constant struggle could the feelings in his heart remain so vibrant.

Jiang Yinghe heard no response from the other. It was only after a short silence that Jun-er's emotionally-charged words rang out.

"You tell me not to hurt him, but you're willing to do this very thing to me."

The footsteps grew distant.

Jiang Yinghe could not pull off the strip of fabric obscuring his vision. It must be some kind of artifact. He knew that Huanhan and Jun-er must be fighting by now, but there was only silence around him.

With both his hearing and sight taken from him, Jiang Yinghe calmed his heart to analyze Qin Jun's parting words...What did they mean? How could a Half-step Golden Immortal like him be injured by a Nascent Soul cultivator?

He was more worried about Huanhan—His cultivation might not have stabilized so soon after exiting seclusion. If he put his life on the line...

The more Jiang Yinghe thought about Huanhan being able to injure Qin Jun, the more unlikely it seemed. His own situation was precarious enough, but his habit of behaving like an old father was acting up again—fussing over his beloved disciples' wellbeing. He paced around the bed and tried calling for the system in his head a few times.

But the system was silent as if all it cared about was raising disciples. The astounding news that one of them suddenly turned into an evil cultivator didn't seem to bother it much.

Just as he was completely helpless, the artifact covering his eyes was suddenly lifted. A small ghost stood before him.

He didn't look like the one serving tea the past few days, and the resentful energy on him was rather weak...

Jiang Yinghe was in the middle of his thoughts when the person in front of him removed his disguise to reveal a scarred, yet beautiful face.

It was Chang Ye!

Jiang Yinghe watched as he put on his half-mask again before blinking at him.

"Shizun!" Little Chang Ye's voice was barely above a whisper. "Let's quickly get out of here!"

Jiang Yinghe was confused: "You...didn't you return with Xiao Yun-shidi?"

Chang Ye brushed off his clothes and shed his ghostly disguise entirely. He took Jiang Yinghe's hand in his as he spoke. "For some reason, I was suddenly really worried about Shizun. I felt something wasn't right. So I followed you guys in secret and found out that something really was wrong! I never thought that Qin-shixiong was a ghost cultivator that abused Shizun's considerations for him..."

He paused and urged Jiang Yinghe again. "Let's hurry up and leave while he's occupied—"

Jiang Yinghe trusted him, but he was still worried: "But your Da-shixiong..."

"He'll be fine." Chang Ye pulled him to his feet. "Shizun worries too much. The Patriarch wants to become cultivation partners with you, so how could he bear to kill your disciple?"

He added silently in his heart. "It's more like he wants to dice his corpse into thousands of pieces."

Jiang Yinghe, torn over leaving his vulnerable disciple to the tender mercy of his evil disciple, was dragged away by his youngest disciple. He saw Chang Ye circle around the bed and make a hand seal. The dimensional array around the palace suddenly shook. A weak spot revealed itself.

...How does Ye-er know the method to dispel this kind of array? Did I teach him this?

Jiang Yinghe stared dumbfoundedly at the hand pulling on his own. Chang Ye offered an explanation, "I learned this in secret from the ghost cultivators when I infiltrated the Nether Realm."

He was lying through the skin of his teeth but you couldn't tell from his bright expression. "I've already scouted it out. If we keep going in this direction, we can enter the main camp of the devil race. Then, if we pass through the Million Devil Outskirts, we can return to the Western Province!"

Jiang Yinghe listened patiently, but he had a strange feeling. He lightly frowned. "...This route?"

"Yep." Chang Ye nodded. "The Nether Realm is really messed up right now, so it's the perfect opportunity to escape. Although this route is roundabout, it's our best bet for avoiding detection."

Chang Ye glanced at the other person's slightly messy hair and puffy lips. The smile on his face grew more dazzling, and a wave of possessiveness crashed over the shores of his heart.

He swept his gaze over the book on the table that showed signs of having been flipped through. There was some regret in his heart.

—If he had more time, he could've added more content.

It's too bad that he could only add on the most basic and true fact about all evil cultivators.

Author's Corner:

HeHe: You can doubt my skill with a sword, but you can't doubt my teaching methods! How could I have raised someone that wasn't a righteous and upstanding pillar of society!!!

Reader: ...Um. You used the wrong bottle to raise your disciples.

Rain: Keep taking advantage of your Shizun while you can, Chang Ye, your reckoning is yet to come...

Sahl —

Jiang Yinghe: 'Wait, wait a minute. Is my questionable orientation about to be forcefully bent?' 😂 Self awareness at its finest!

Qin Jun: "Shizun...we need to alleviate the effects of the medicine." 😂

Jun-er writes a new Ghost Realm wiki entry: '101 Excuses for Sexually Harassing Your Highly Attractive Shizun'.

Li Huanhan rocking up like a BOSS: Fight me, bro!

Chang Ye: Taking advantage of shixiongs having a spat. 'Shizun, I am perfectly harmless.'

OceanofPDF.com

CH33 - TALK PROPERLY (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe was somewhat frazzled.

He felt like he came out of the frying pan only to go straight into the fire.

Chang Ye led him straight out of the Nether Realm into devil territory without looking back. After fleeing into a sea of sparsely populated forests and trees, they arrived at a city brimming with devil cultivators.

But since there were so many devils in and around the border city of Wanyao, Chang Ye told him that they needed to disguise themselves to avoid detection.

Jiang Yinghe wholeheartedly agreed. A less heavy-handed approach would serve them well. If he headed back to Peng Lai right now, the sect could be wiped out because of him. It was better to hide in the outskirts of this town to avoid bringing trouble to others.

He didn't know how long Qin Jun's interest would last, so it was better to wait a little before deciding on a course of action.

He was able to calmly consider all of this until Chang Ye brought out the disguise he would be using. His previous attitude was in complete upheaval. He felt like his pride as a man, no, as a member of the human race was in complete tatters.

There was...a pair of bunny ears in Chang Ye's hands.

Jiang Yinghe stared blankly at them, and his head was filled with a variety of strange thoughts. He saw his little disciple's smiling face.

"Shizun, when you mingle with crowds of devils, you must have this kind of unique disguise." Chang Ye lied with a straight face. "Using concealment arrays is too dangerous, and might cause unneeded conflicts... What if there was a Devil Baron currently patrolling the city? It's best to be low-key right now."

Jiang Yinghe didn't know if he should be proud that his little disciple seemed to finally have grown up or adamantly reject the soft and white rabbit ears in front of him. He was silent for a moment. "This, how do you wear this thing?"

"You need to run your spiritual energy through it." Chang Ye smiled slightly. "Maybe Ye-er should help Shizun put them on."

Jiang Yinghe: "...Okay."

He controlled his rampant thoughts and convinced himself that this was just a necessary method of avoiding danger.

Jiang Yinghe's black hair was soft to the touch and sleek as well. It felt better than the silky fur of a small animal against the hand. Chang Ye pressed down on his shoulders and guided Shizun to take a seat before gathering up his hair.

There was a fragrance on his little disciple's body as well, but it was different from Jiang Yinghe's cold and distant aroma. Chang Ye's scent was subtle and rich. This, combined with his exquisite appearance, gave others the feeling of an androgynous youth of unparalleled grace and talent.

His hands were very white and slender as well. When they were combing back the hair by Jiang Yinghe's temples, they were almost the same shade of colour as the skin on Shizun's peerless face.

Chang Ye silently swallowed back his saliva as he arranged Shizun's hair into an appropriate position. He then slowly passed spiritual energy through the rabbit ears.

Stimulated, the rabbit ears twitched and bore a close resemblance to the real deal. Chang Ye placed the snow white ears into the parted portion of Jiang Yinghe's hair. He lightly touched the tips of the ears.

Jiang Yinghe felt that gentle touch, as if the ears were really a part of him.

...This is just too tragic.

Jiang Yinghe took in a deep breath. He then felt Chang Ye knead the ears repeatedly.

His entire body tense up, and he asked with surprise: "...What are you doing?"

Chang Ye reluctantly withdrew his hands and smiled. "It's such a rare opportunity. Let Ye-er have a bit of fun."

At the moment, Jiang Yinghe wasn't sure if he was talking about the rarity of the artifact or the rarity of him having a pair of rabbit, ahem, devil ears.

People really couldn't overcome their circumstances.

Chang Ye stepped back to admire his handiwork. As Shizun lowered his head, a pair of long ears drooped down as well. He just intended to take a look before, but he felt his thoughts veer towards a very inappropriate direction.

He was almost afraid to look more as he took out the final part of the disguise.

—A fluffy and round tail.

Jiang Yinghe: "...Is there really a need to be so strict?"

Chang Ye's expression was stern. "Shizun taught me to carefully consider my options and act accordingly. How can little things like this stop us?"

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

He had a sudden urge to go back and strangle his past self.

He sighed as his little disciple approached. He slowly untied the belt around his robes without much thought. "Did you know...about your Shixiong's inclination?"

Chang Ye attentively loosened an especially stubborn knot and removed the outer layer. He replied naturally, "How could I have known? But Qin-shixiong must have harbored deviant intentions towards Shizun for a long time. I remember that Shizun even protected his heart when he was forcefully undergoing his tribulation due to his constitution at Yun city."

The red-clothed youth rambled on and on, digging up all the dirt from the past. Finally, he nodded self-righteously and insisted, "He must have been covetous of Shizun since the beginning."

Jiang Yinghe silently listened. He didn't know what to say.

He previously thought that Qin Jun just wanted to eat him, but now that he considered it with a calm mind, Qin Jun had plenty of opportunities to strike when guarding him at night. But he never did.

Jiang Yinghe continued to think about this until his little disciple peeled back the inner layer of his clothes. He grabbed Chang Ye's wrist.

"I'll do it myself." Jiang Yinghe took the soft rabbit tail from his hand and sighed, "Why do I have to wear these things? I remember that Devil Baron Jiuying only had faint devil markings on his body."

Chang Ye said, "Devil Barons are rare, so it would attract a lot of attention and defeat the entire purpose of hiding ourselves."

His words held a lot of merit.

Jiang Yinghe pinched the rabbit tail before saying, "You go out first."

Chang Ye blinked and tried to dissuade him. "Why doesn't this disciple do it? What if Shizun has trouble putting it on? It can be difficult to afix..."

Jiang Yinghe hesitated for a moment. He heard his little disciple's mouth run at full speed. "If it's worn incorrectly, the sensation of taking it off is like ripping the skin."

Jiang Yinghe's doubts were defeated after he heard that it would hurt. He made one last struggle in his mind before his little disciple's obedient and curious voice rang out.

"Is Shizun worried about this disciple doing something? But we're both men...I thought Shizun preferred female cultivators?"

The last few words were soft and uninformed. They hit hard against Jiang Yinghe's heart. He strengthened his orientation and finally replied, "...Okay."

Wanyao City was surrounded by ancient woods that reached up towards the sky. The city was in the midst of the forest. From the window, one could just catch a glimpse of the moonlight outside that was as cold as water.

Chang Ye did not look towards the moonlight.

He was focused on his own bright moon.

The thin, white inner shirt was removed by Jiang Yinghe's long and frosty fingers to reveal a pair of slender shoulders and narrow collarbones.

His back was illuminated by the moonlight from outside. It seemed to make his flawless skin even more tender and radiant. Chang Ye stared at the inky strands that drifted down, as well as the pair of rabbit ears that moved with him.

He suddenly thought that this wasn't what he always desired. This was just throwing fuel on the fire of his desire that burned day in and day out.

"I'm ready."

Jiang Yinghe paused as he took in the beet-red ears of his little disciple who seemed even more uncomfortable than him.

Chang Ye quietly said, "You don't need to take it all off... Just enough to connect this artifact."

Jiang Yinghe stopped and nodded. He had a feeling like, 'if he's more embarrassed than me, then I don't need to feel so ashamed'.

"Shizun," Chang Ye's voice was always pleasant and demure, "can you turn around?"

This kind of thing should be placed on the tailbone, right? Jiang Yinghe cooperatively turned around. He was thinking about what to do if Qin Jun insisted on pursuing him. An evil Half-step Golden Immortal cultivator reviving was like...

His mind went blank.

A cool finger touched his tailbone with only a thin layer of separation in between. The sensation sent a chill up his spine. Jiang Yinghe wasn't worried, but a strange wariness crept into his mind...was he too trusting of his disciple?

There was already a precedent of him being caught off guard, and this situation...

Just when alarm bells were blaring in his head, he heard Chang Ye's soft voice.

"Shizun, it's done."

Jiang Yinghe let out a sigh of relief and cleared the mess of thoughts from his head. He didn't inspect the new addition and slowly put his clothes back on. He brushed himself off as he said, "Retreating is not enough in the long term. I'm worried that he will bring trouble to Peng Lai if he can't find me."

Chang Ye looked at him. "What if it came down to that?"

"Then I can only," Jiang Yinghe paused for a moment, "fight against him."

Fight? Chang Ye's heart skipped a beat and he followed up on Jiang Yinghe's statement. "There is a clear difference in your abilities, so how can you two fight? Shizun, this isn't resisting him, this is seeking death."

Jiang Yinghe lowered his gaze. "I would rather embrace the freedom of death than be held captive."

Chang Ye was actually silent for once and he didn't know what to say for a long time. "It will never come to that. I owe Shizun and Peng Lai sect a debt of gratitude for teaching me, so Ye-er will protect Peng Lai."

Jiang Yinghe was comforted by those words. Although the cultivation of his little disciple was low, his heart was in the right place. This was an example of a socialist master-disciple relationship at its finest.

He reached out a hand to tenderly stroke Chang Ye's hair. Chang Ye lowered his head to make it more accessible.

Jiang Yinghe asked, "If we have to be disguised, then what about you?"

Something soft seemed to erupt from the hair beneath his fingers. A pair of fuzzy feline ears sprung out.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback: "...They're completely automated?"

Before the sound of his words finished, a thick and long tail wrapped strongly around his waist and pulled him in Chang Ye's direction. Jiang Yinghe almost stumbled straight into his little disciple's arms.

This tail was way too big...Jiang Yinghe braced against his shoulder as he regained his balance. He heard Chang Ye's slightly lowered voice.

"What is 'completely automated'?" His words were forced and held a hint of hurt. "Anyways, this tail doesn't listen to what I say. I clearly told the merchant that my cultivation was low and I couldn't use high-level artifacts, but that little devil cheated me..."

Jiang Yinghe didn't think too much of it as he patted his little disciple to comfort him. "No big deal, it's just a tail."

He hasn't realised yet how much trouble this tail would be for him later on.

Chang Ye obediently nodded. "Shizun, the effects of the Seven Days of Joy...there was only one day left, right? Would stopping treatment early cause problems?"

It was only with his reminder that Jiang Yinghe remembered that he wasn't able to receive treatment on the last day due to various factors. The little bit left can't cause that many problems, right?

It was not something to be too concerned with. After all, he still had the He Huan Sect artifact from Tong Guiyu...Jiang Yinghe glanced at his wrist and froze.

—Where did it go?

Chang Ye came to the same conclusion as he softly laughed before immediately sobering up. He asked carefully, "Shizun, did you misplace it?"

Jiang Yinghe: "...Talk properly. Your tail is swishing around too happily."

—-

Wanyao city had many inns for 'devils' like Jiang Yinghe and Chang Ye.

In the eyes of those around them, Jiang Yinghe and Chang Ye were an ideal devil race couple. Many liked rabbit devils that appeared outwardly cool like this, but had another side hidden within.

After all, rabbits were in heat year-round and had a large 'appetite'. They were also inclined to be tender and submissive, so they made very good cultivation partners to raise one's cultivation with.

The youth wearing a mask and dressed in red, on the other hand, had the aura of a carnivorous animal about him. The bellhops couldn't help but bring the couple up while they were chatting.

"The rabbit devil that went upstairs before," An employee with dog ears said as he wiped down the tables, "why was his devilish scent so faint? Did he only successfully transform recently?"

"Most likely." Another girl swept her fox tail around as she munched on sunflower seeds. "The devil beast accompanying him is another story entirely. I can't tell precisely what he is, but judging from his aura, if the two of them were to dual cultivate then that rabbit would probably cry for a long time."

The bellhop sighed, "He's way too good-looking. I want to get myself a rabbit devil like that too. Although he looks cold, I think his gaze when it sweeps over is warm and soft..."

"Keep dreaming." The girl spat out the shells. "That carnivorous beast will tear your throat out if you keep thinking about his partner. Only someone as handsome as him is worthy of such a beautiful rabbit."

Their discussion started to turn in a more carnal direction when the front doors suddenly opened. A person who was clearly not a devil swept his gaze over the front desk. He politely asked, "Is your manager around?"

The balding head of a thousand year old ginseng devil popped out from behind the front desk. He observed the other while stroking his beard for a moment, sensing an immeasurable strength hidden in that person's body. He solemnly replied, "I am the manager here. May I ask who you are?"

The other person laughed and continued in a pleasant tone, "This one is called Qiu Chou, I am here on behalf of my master to inquire about two individuals."

Author's Corner:

Li Huanhan and Qin Jun: We should've killed off this Shidi of ours earlier! (Suddenly forming an alliance)

Rain: Huanhan hot on Shizun's trail lol

Sahl:

Chang Ye >> bunny kink

Me...Didn't see that one coming...

OceanofPDF.com

CH34 - A RELUCTANT APPEARANCE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The night was silent.

There was a little devil banging on his gong outside to announce the time. The moonlight crept through the window's lattice to scatter across the floor.

This was the first time Jiang Yinghe visited Wanyao City. He had met many archdevils before and treated smaller ones devoted solely to cultivation with kindness, but he never thought that devils, with their beast-like qualities, would be able to also maintain such a civilized society.

He also never thought that the Seven Days of Joy could torture him so much. Even with just the one day remaining, the effects were still powerful.

Jiang Yinghe sat by the window cooling his fevered skin for a long time before he could calm down the lust-filled force heating up his body. He took off his outer cloak and returned to bed. He wasn't feeling too well.

He was reminded again of his failure to be a good teacher and his mood soured. He tossed and turned on the bed for a while before he noticed that his temperature was warm again.

Normally, someone with an ice cultivation like him should be cool to the touch.

Jiang Yinghe buried his head in the blanket, which caused the snow white rabbit ears on his head to droop as well and land on top of the covers. The sensation of another pair of ears was uncanny.

He couldn't help but fondle them, but he withdrew his hand after a light touch. He felt like both his ears and cheeks were burning—was he this sensitive before?

Jiang Yinghe turned over and tried to clear his mind while glancing at the ceiling. His head was filled with thoughts like "You're fucked, you're not clean anymore". He tried touching the artefact linked to his senses again.

How could a grown man like him be so physically sensitive? He was like some horny teenager.

Jiang Yinghe lost all hope. He was debating if it was the incomplete treatment or the artifact that was causing his problem. It was fine if it was the latter, but if it was the former...did he have any face left to lose?

He started to consider how long Tong Guiyu would laugh at him if he asked about this.

The sound of the little devil announcing the hour grew distant.

In the end, Jiang Yinghe was forced to circulate his inner energy to endure the torment. Just as the abnormal warmth was starting to fade, a familiar figure crept into his bed and then his arms.

Chang Ye hugged him with bright and clear eyes. His beast ears twitched. "Shizun, are you not sleeping yet?"

He had slipped into his Master's bed many times before. He squirmed in Jiang Yinghe's lap to get more comfortable, then innocently said, "Can Ye-er sleep with Shizun tonight?"

Normally it would be fine, but Jiang Yinghe was hard and ready and about to burst after being brushed against by Chang Ye's taut body. He silently shifted away and warned himself as he looked into the obedient little disciple beside him,

No. This is Chang Ye. He trusts and relies on you so much, so you can't show him such a humiliating sight.

But he didn't know that, as the moonlight grew hazy, his face was already slightly flushed. Even those inky black eyes were moist and glittering, as if they were melted snowflakes on plum blossom welcoming in spring.

Unseen by others, Chang Ye swallowed his saliva. It was the first time he found out how much of a good-for-nothing he was.

Shizun was just too alluring, and those rabbit ears really suited him. It made people think...

He shuffled closer to the other person until he was touching Jiang Yinghe's shoulder. He softly said, "Shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe groaned, "En."

Chang Ye looked at him and asked, "Are you uncomfortable right now?"

Jiang Yinghe reached for his own face after hearing that. It was a bit hot.

"No." Jiang Yinghe steadied his voice, "I'm fine..."

He watched the little disciple before him reach out to also touch his face.

Chang Ye's fingertips were soft and careful, as if he was brushing over a priceless piece of pottery. His gaze remained between Jiang Yinghe's eyebrows. He spoke in a quiet voice. "Shizun, your face is flushed."

Before Jiang Yinghe could reply, Chang Ye pressed down on his shoulder until he was underneath him. A somewhat hot breath came from above.

The little disciple on top of him said with absolute sincerity, "Is Shizun in heat?"

Jiang Yinghe: "...I'm not a devil."

He paused and slightly scrunched up his brows. "How could you say it like that? I'm just...experiencing some side effects."

Chang Ye wasn't one to let go easily after latching on. He lowered his head and began to massage Jiang Yinghe's long ears while saying in an ambiguous tone, "Really? Shizun can tell me everything—"

Jiang Yinghe, '!!!'

The next moment, the little disciple that had never even been scolded by him was pushed off the bed. Jiang Yinghe curled up in a corner with the blanket. His nails were threatening to tear the fabric tightly grasped in his hands.

It was quite some time before he was able to push down the feeling that made his mind go blank. He took in a burning breath before closing his eyes and saying, "...Ye-er, go back to sleep by yourself."

Chang Ye did not answer.

Jiang Yinghe also didn't hear the sound of footsteps, so he thought his little disciple was saddened by his rejection and had just slumped on the floor. Just as he was about to lift his head to explain, a thick and furry tail ensnared his calf.

His body was slender and his calf was as straight and fine, so the tail was able to wrap around it completely.

Chang Ye returned to his side like a cat reclaiming its territory. The tip of his tail brushed over the back of Jiang Yinghe's foot with a feather-light touch.

"Shizun..." The little disciple called out, "What's gotten into you?"

His tone was far too pure, how could Jiang Yinghe bear to reply?

While he was hesitating, Chang Ye captured his hand again and leaned over to continue questioning him. "Where exactly do you feel bad?"

Jiang Yinghe closed his eyes, then reopened them after finding his composure. "Everything's fine. You should go."

The little disciple that has always been obedient in his heart didn't react to his words and even shifted closer to sniff delicately at Shizun's lingering fragrance.

That tail became more and more brazen, rubbing repeatedly against Jiang Yinghe's silky, white skin.

...Why does this tail seem to have a very wanton mind of its own?

Jiang Yinghe rubbed at his eyebrows. "Are you still not leaving?"

It was a precarious situation. If he lost control over his desires and made moves on his own disciple right now, wouldn't he regret it for the rest of his life?

Jiang Yinghe was completely oblivious to his current precarious position in his disciple's eyes. His sight was filled with Chang Ye's innocent but dazzling features. He took a deep breath to try and calm down—even if he became completely bent because of this, he couldn't drag his little disciple down with him.

Then, Chang Ye's breath drew closer. He directly reached out to grasp Jiang Yinghe's wrist, saying in a soft voice, "Shizun, let me help you."

Before Jiang Yinghe could reply, that mischievous tail came around.

"Hiss..." Jiang Yinghe unconsciously shrunk back, but he was unable to avoid it. He was gently pressed down onto the other person's chest.

The rich fragrance emanating from the other mingled with Jiang Yinghe's own cold scent.

Jiang Yinghe was unable to push him away. He could hear Chang Ye's mutterings.

"I'll just use the tail, alright? It'll just be a tool to speed things along. Shizun, you look truly miserable. Unfortunately I can only control it half the time, it sometimes moves on its own..."

Jiang Yinghe felt even worse now. He wanted to cry. He tried to stop himself from asking, "...Where did you learn this from?"

Chang Ye leaned over to kiss his tear-stained eyelashes. "Has Shizun always thought of me as a child?"

Jiang Yinghe turned his head away to catch his breath. "What else would you be?"

The little disciple lightly laughed from beside him. "En... But now Ye-er has grown up."

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes and looked over to see enough desire to swallow a man whole in those usually clear, black eyes. There was also the possessiveness of a beast nestled within.

He suddenly found out that the child in his eyes had grown out his sharp teeth a long time ago. A predator looked back at him.

Chang Ye lowered his head to kiss Jiang Yinghe's neck and Adam's apple before slowly licking it. He asked in a low voice, "What is Shizun thinking now?"

Jiang Yinghe did not reply. He felt like his ability to judge those around him was truly abysmal.

This wasn't an abandoned kitten, but instead a wild beast that had grown wicked some time ago.

Chang Ye's sharp teeth traced his long neck. He paused from biting his Adam's apple again to ask, "Are you still thinking of Li-shixiong?"

He gave off a very dangerous feeling while asking this question. Jiang Yinghe shrunk back and held his disciple's shoulder. He asked, "Chang Ye, are you...you couldn't be..."

"Yes." Chang Ye spoke frankly, "Ye-er likes Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe was too shocked to speak.

"Ye-er wants to be intimate with Shizun." The other's words conveyed a strong longing. "There's no one that can make me happy other than Shizun.

Jiang Yinghe frowned and the frustration in his heart rose. "Do you know what you're saying? Qin Jun lied to me and deceived me, how are you any different from him right now?"

Chang Ye spoke sincerely. "His feelings were lies but Ye-er's are sincere."

Jiang Yinghe felt that suspicious tail grab onto his hand. The other person came closer to lap at the soft rabbit ears on his head.

Jiang Yinghe's body grew weak. All of his strength was taken away by this little bastard.

He had no idea what a sight he was right now. In Change Ye's eyes, the Jiang Yinghe that was always mild and distant was now scalding him in a pool of tears. The contrast stimulated his sensitive mind.

His instincts as a devil awoke and he was almost excited out of his mind.

Chang Ye carefully brushed away the loose strands of hair on Shizun's delicate face. He paused when he reached the other man's eyes.

Jiang Yinghe's clear and slender eyes, whose edges were as cold as a morning star were now stained by the beginning of tears. He didn't know if it was from being played with or anger.

It seemed like...anger was more likely the case.

While Chang Ye paused, Jiang Yinghe reached his breaking point. Tears slid soundlessly down his face, but he was too proud to let the other person see. He ducked his head and looked away.

Every drop burned away at Chang Ye's heart and ruined his motivation to continue.

As Chang Ye stopped, so did that fuzzy tail of his. He embraced Jiang Yinghe and wiped away his tears with a pained expression. He quietly said,

"I won't do it anymore Shizun. It was just a joke, please don't get angry. Ye-er was wrong."

Jiang Yinghe's mouth pinched into a flat line. His voice was high and cold. "You did it on purpose."

The anger in his heart continued to build up.

I treated you like a disciple, but you were thinking of sleeping with me the whole time? Does a Shizun like me have even a shred of respect left?

But no matter how angry Jiang Yinghe was, his first reaction was still to find a way to peacefully resolve the situation. How could he bear to beat to death the little disciple he'd raised?

He had to suppress his fury to analyze the problem—where exactly did he go wrong? One could be explained as coincidence, so what was this? Was this some kind of terrible joke?

Chang Ye continued to comfort him in his arms. His true self that he had exposed was gradually hidden away again to reveal his harmless persona. "Ye-er just... I saw the way Qin-shixiong acted towards Shizun..."

Jiang Yinghe, "...Don't copy things like that."

"Was Shizun really scared?" Chang Ye blinked his large eyes, "Does this count as bullying Shizun?"

How could it not? He was about to be scared silly. Jiang Yinghe was not willing to dignify that question with a response. He turned his back to him before stating, "Get out."

The other person was silent for a while. His thought process was unknown. He suddenly said, "I should really...help Shizun with the side effects."

It was fine when he didn't mention it, but now that he did, Jiang Yinghe's fury reached new heights. If Chang Ye hadn't come in and started kissing and licking him, how could the bit of medication that remained have such a

profound effect? Wasn't this his disciple's fault for not respecting boundaries?

I bet I can get through this kind of thing just fine without any of you bothering me about it.

Chang Ye waited a while only for his Shizun to swear at him through gritted teeth.

"Fuck off."

He glanced deeply at Jiang Yinghe's back while putting his shoes on. He began softly, "Then...have a good rest Shizun. If you need me, just call and I'll come right away."

Chang Ye slowly backed out of the room and closed the door. He turned to lean against it as he stared at the ground for a while. Then he raised his head to look at the bright moon in the sky.

...What should he do? He lowered his hand to brush over the saber at his side and laughed at how pathetic he was.

He planned it all out down to the last detail, only to crumble under a single one of Shizun's tears...This wasn't who he was.

Chang Ye breathed the crisp night air deep into his lungs.

—-

The next day.

The atmosphere between the two was slightly strange.

Jiang Yinghe tried to convince himself to pretend like the events of last night never happened, but he couldn't help remembering that sly, curling tail. He ended up paying special attention to the tails of other devils.

What kind of devil beast was on Chang Ye's body? He didn't feel like it was one he'd seen before...

Jiang Yinghe thought about it for a while but he couldn't figure it out.

Back on Earth, he was an honourable civics teacher, so he had a very high sense of responsibility. There were complicated feelings in his heart now that he had somehow led his disciples astray.

...In the end, this all happened because his sexual education wasn't up to par. What if Chang Ye misunderstood his own orientation due to being influenced during a vulnerable part of his development?

This wouldn't do. He needed to clarify some concepts for him when they had time. It wasn't too late yet to rein in this child.

Jiang Yinghe had thought of him as a kid for many years, so it was hard to change his habits immediately. Just as he was zoning out, someone knocked on the room's door.

The dog-eared bellhop came in with food. It was all regular fare for devils. Even if Jiang Yinghe hadn't begun practising inedia a long time ago and therefore had no desire for food, he wouldn't be interested in these dishes.

Jiang Yinghe glanced at him and said in a neutral tone, "Leave it here."

The attendant looked at him and suddenly said, "Um, forgive this servant for asking, but you...do you have two companions?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He asked: "Companions...and two at that?"

"Yeah." The bellhop nodded his head rapidly, "Didn't you abandon one and elope with...the other one?"

Jiang Yinghe had no idea what he was saying. He could only listen as the dog devil went on.

"Please don't blame me for being nosy, honoured guest. It's just that apparently the one you offended is very powerful. He seems to be at Nascent Soul level at least. They're looking for you, and our small establishment can't afford to offend such a character..."

As he spoke, he took out a piece of blood jade and placed it on the table.

The blood jade was originally a deep colour, but it began to flash before Jiang Yinghe and dissolved. At the same time, the entire floor of the hotel started to leak a vividly red fluid, as if the Blood Pool of the demonic cultivators had moved here. A wrathful and strong killing intent wafted through the air.

Then, the bloody fluid converged into a pond and poured out like a geyser. A familiar figure emerged from the liquid.

Before Jiang Yinghe could get a good look, an aroma that he knew well enveloped him. The strong scent of blood accompanied by a sudden and tight embrace.

Jiang Yinghe was actually in a fair amount of pain from being hugged like this. He heard erratic and fast panting from beside his ear. Li Huanhan spoke in a deep and raspy voice.

"Shizun...I've found you."

His entire body was covered in fresh blood, both from the Blood Pool and his own unhealed wounds. The red dyed his black clothes an ever darker shade.

—-

Li Huanhan held him rigidly against himself. He buried his head in his Shizun's neck to try and suppress his violently fluctuating emotions. He was on the brink of suffering a qi deviation, and his cruel and bloodied aura was barely restrained. Even so, he slowly unclenched his arms, as if he was afraid of scaring the other person.

"I wanted to avoid this..." His voice was barely above a whisper, "I didn't want to face you like this."

He lifted his head to reveal a pair of blood-red eyes to Jiang Yinghe. There were visible red veins on his face and neck, stopping just an inch from his

heart. It was a sign of being entangled by internal demons.

Jiang Yinghe stared at him in shock. He took in the heavenly demon energy radiating from him before asking in a shaking voice, "Did...did you have a qi deviation?"

No, it wasn't possible, right? With Huanhan's personality and mental fortitude...how could he...

His tangled thoughts came to a sudden halt as his hand came into contact with something. He looked down to see his fingers covered in blood.

The other person was injured, but it was as if he didn't even feel it.

Jiang Yinghe was reeling from all these revelations. It was already very fortunate to survive an encounter with Qin Jun. His heart suddenly ached for this disciple of his. He said quietly, "Why are you running around while injured? Why are you in such a rush to find me?"

Author's Corner:

HeHe: Fuck me. Every single day's like a dream.

Chang Ye: ...I just left for a bit...

Rain:

Two down, one to go...

Sahl:

All Shizun's real disciples are coming home to roost. 😂 As the editor I know I shouldn't be biased, but damn Li Huanhan's got just as much BOSS energy as Lan Wangji when he makes an entrance. And I am Here For It. 😏

OceanofPDF.com

CH35 - ...WOLVES EAT RABBITS, RIGHT? (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The scent of fresh blood on Li Huanhan was cloying.

Jiang Yinghe lowered his eyes to carefully examine his disciple's wounds. He only relaxed when he found that they didn't damage his nascent soul. "Why did you succumb to internal demons? What's with these markings?"

He naturally knew about the flower-like prints left by internal demons, but this was his first time seeing them on someone he knew. Under normal circumstances, they would only appear when one had a deep obsession with a person or thing.

Regardless of their faction, all cultivators have to learn how to temper their hearts. If a person's mental state became unstable, they would meet an untimely end, no matter how high their cultivation was.

The demon markings were very close to his heart. However, under Jiang Yinghe's eyes, the vividly red patterning slowly retreated, as though shy, over Huanhan's shoulder.

Jiang Yinghe was surprised by this. He had no idea why they would suddenly move away. He recalled the historical records he had once read and spoke softly, "Although your tribulation was successful, you became a demonic cultivator... What kind of internal demons do you have?"

Li Huanhan didn't answer right away.

Jiang Yinghe could hear the heavy, restrained breathing surrounding him. He felt like the person in front of him was walking down a dark road that only became more treacherous and narrow the further he went...But he endured it all without complaint.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to reach out a hand to him and pull him out from the muddy waters, but he was just out of reach.

He sensed the breathing beside his ear stop for a moment. Huanhan's deep voice rang out.

"It's not a big deal." His tone was soft and no different from before. "...This disciple has locked himself in a cage of his own making. I'm willing to wait."

Jiang Yinghe had a suspicion that this had something to do with him. He hesitated before asking, "What are you waiting for?'

Li Huanhan stared at him. "The day that he becomes aware of this disciple's...feelings."

He paused during the latter half of his speech, and the last word was barely above a whisper. It was as if it was the hopeless dream of an utterly lost person.

Jiang Yinghe remembered Abbot Chan Qing's warning. He soon realized that Huanhan was truly 'unable to obtain what he desired' right now. He didn't know who that person was, but he couldn't help but dislike them already.

In his opinion, Li Huanhan was a very gentle person. A straight-laced sprout like him...wait. How did a straight-laced sprout become a demonic cultivator, ah?!

Jiang Yinghe's thoughts came to a sudden halt. His pride as an educator took three heavy blows in a row—

His second disciple was originally an evil cultivator, his little disciple was misled on matters of love, and even the first disciple he was most confident in, fell to his internal demons and became a demonic cultivator.

The white rabbit ears on his head drooped down. He sighed in defeat. "There's no use in just waiting. Why don't you confess your feelings? They might accept you."

Li Huanhan glanced at him before reaching out to grasp his wrist. "I know he wouldn't."

"En?"

"This disciple has thought about it many times, but I know he...he can't accept it yet." Li Huanhan held his fingers. "Shizun needn't worry."

"How could I not?" Jiang Yinghe raised his eyebrow. "You've come so far in your cultivation only to fall because of love. How will you face your teachers, friends and those back at Peng Lai? Is all of this worth it for just one person?"

Li Huanhan steadily massaged his fingertips. He replied, "Other than Shizun, this disciple has no friends or old acquaintances who can tie me down."

He lowered his gaze, and his eyes that were burning like hellfire actually softened. Li Huanhan interlaced their fingers and continued in a calm voice filled with suppressed emotions that betrayed his sincerity. "...He's worth it."

Even though Jiang Yinghe knew that these words were for someone else, he was still touched by them. He didn't waste his several thousand years of experience being single and immediately clasped back on the other's hands. He said somewhat quickly, "It's not! Are you brain dead? If it's not going to work out let's just find someone else. Are you going to get hung up on the first crooked tree that caught you? ...Li Huanhan, if you dare to waste all the years I've spent guiding you for another man, I swear—"

He paused to think of a credible threat. He decided to be harsh, "Just watch me uproot that tree from the ground."

Outside of his expectations, his first disciple wasn't intimidated at all. He even briefly laughed.

"Alright." Li Huanhan replied, "Shizun never plants crooked sprouts."

Li Huanhan rarely said things in jest, so it was a while before Jiang Yinghe realised he was joking in his calm voice.

...He really couldn't get angry.

Jiang Yinghe kneaded his forehead. He was getting a headache. Looking at the mess in front of him, it seems that his curriculum needs some serious revisions.

After gathering his thoughts, he couldn't help but ask, "Are your injuries caused by Jun...Qin Jun?"

They weren't actually. Qin Jun and Li Huanhan were about equal in strength. They were both serious going into the fight and even managed to redirect the flow of the Nether Realm's River Styx. If it wasn't for them sensing that something was not right back in the main palace, they could've probably blown a hole in the sky without blinking an eye.

They were both on the level of immortals, and mountains and seas shifted with their every move. It was a simple matter for their sword light to split the River Styx in two. If two Half-step Golden Immortals dueled to the point of sustaining injuries, then the aftershocks would be felt the world over.

Li Huanhan's wounds were self-inflicted.

While he was searching for Jiang Yinghe, his internal demon had taken control of this vessel and brought his forcefully suppressed demonic instincts to the brink. A mental and spiritual conflict like this could only be resolved by himself.

The blood was just from a miscalculation on his part. He didn't mind it much, which is why he forgot to clean it off and let Jiang Yinghe's hands be stained.

Li Huanhan lowered his head as he wiped clean Shizun's fingers using a handkerchief. He continued until not a trace of red remained on Jiang Yinghe's flawless skin. While he worked, he said, "It's no big deal. Shizun doesn't need to worry. It's just..."

Li Huanhan looked up and finally noticed the appendages sticking out from Jiang Yinghe's hair. "What is that?"

Jiang Yinghe paused. He'd been in the devils' world for so long he forgot he was wearing these things!

The pair of rabbit ears seemed to react to its owner's mood and curled up in embarrassment. The soft tufts of fur on the tips trembled, and they seemed to almost have a mind of its own.

Li Huanhan spoke cautiously, "...Is it a disguise?"

Jiang Yinghe nodded quickly. Thank goodness that Huanhan was an understanding fellow so he didn't need to explain. He asked, "What did Qin Jun think of me leaving? Was he mad?"

'Mad' was too light a word to describe it. He was so furious that he almost dropped dead on the spot.

Li Huanhan made a grunt of agreement before reaching over to Jiang Yinghe's rabbit ears. He asked carefully, "Can I touch them? I'm a bit...curious."

...Why did he give off the aura of a courteous gentleman even when saying words like this?

Jiang Yinghe sighed, "Some side effects of the Seven Days of Joy from before still remain because the treatment was incomplete. They are...sensitive. If you're curious then go touch Chang Ye's ears."

Li Huanhan's fingertip paused at the side of the soft fur. He turned to ask, "Was it little Shidi who brought you here?"

Jiang Yinghe wanted to reply when Chang Ye spoked crisply from behind them.

"Yep—" Chang Ye was seated on the windowsill. It was unknown how long he had been here. He smiled faintly at Li Huanhan. "I didn't think that Shixiong would catch up so soon. It's truly admirable. How did you find this place?"

To locate a single person within the vast Wanyao City was not an easy task. Chang Ye suspected that Li Huanhan must have planted a tracking artifact on Shizun.

Li Huanhan stared at him. "Little Shidi is able to infiltrate the Nether Realm unseen. That is also worthy of praise."

He stood and adjusted his clothes before calmly replying, "Qin Jun had something he wanted to say to little Shidi. Why don't I pass his words along."

Chang Ye placed a hand under his chin. There was a smile on his lips. "I'm all ears."

Li Huanhan glared into the depths of his soul. Every one of his words was freezing cold. "...Sooner or later I'm going to butcher you."

The atmosphere became frozen.

It was said with so much intent that even Jiang Yinghe suspected that it was Huanhan's own words. But he couldn't think of any occasion when Chang Ye might have offended him. Huanhan was an even-tempered person after all...

The youth in red smiled upon hearing his words. He casually licked his sharp teeth and said, "I'll be waiting for the day he succeeds."

—-

Li Huanhan temporarily stayed with them.

At Chang Ye's behest, Jiang Yinghe soon went to pick out a pair of gray wolf ears for his eldest disciple. He argued and haggled over the price with the little devil selling these like he used to do in China for a long time before he was able to snatch them up.

He originally wanted to help Huanhan put them on, but he discovered that the other person was too tall for him. He wordlessly took the artifact from his hands and proceeded to smoothly put them on.

Jiang Yinghe: "...They were clearly the ears of a weaning wolf pup when I bought them, so why do they look so vicious on you."

Li Huanhan furrowed his brows. "Does Shizun not like them?"

"It's not that." Jiang Yinghe continued to observe for a moment. "It just comes off as really aggressive. Also..."

...Wolves eat rabbits, right?

He was beginning to think that he still made a mistake after all his careful considerations.

Chang Ye stood to the side listening to the talk. His disobedient tail wagged the whole time. He said, "It doesn't feel right."

He gave his critique, "Li-shixiong's demonic energy is too strong. People in the City might mistake you for a wild animal."

Li Huanhan turned to glare at him in warning. "I'm not a wild animal, but there is one here."

Chang Ye smiled. His furry tail was no longer moving. His lips swept up as he said, "Between a wild beast and a demonic cultivator, which one is more distinguished?"

The two went back and forth exchanging blows. They both radiated a heavy killing intent, leaving Jiang Yinghe standing cluelessly on the sidelines with

his head in the clouds.

...When did the relationship between the two of them become so harmonious? They're even bickering like friends.

It's really amazing that they're able to put aside their differences to have a nice, long conversation.

Jiang Yinghe gave them space to converse while he took a seat to consider the information Huanhan brought back.

Although his eldest disciple had internal demons and changed into his current appearance, underneath this, he was still the same person he knew from before. But demonic cultivators tended to be mad one way or another. His was probably related to that 'unobtainable' person that he admired.

His second disciple...despite that Patriarch wanting to eat him, he didn't kill Huanhan when he had the chance. Was there still a way to turn this situation around?

Did his emotional teachings touch the other person's heart? Jiang Yinghe's thoughts veered off track once more. He knew that he was the most concerned about Peng Lai and the Dao, and he was afraid that they would be used to threaten him. If it really came down to that, he would have no choice but to reveal himself.

He could leave Peng Lai temporarily to stave off the worst of it, but he couldn't have others suffer because of his mistakes. That was the place that he swore to protect for thousands of years after all. It was his home.

Jiang Yinghe was unable to discern Qin Jun's intention even after so long. He casually raised his eyes to find that the other two had been silent for a while.

Chang Ye was flipping through a book by the window. His thoughts were hidden, but that naughty tail of his was twitching furiously on the floor. Li Huanhan had removed the plain lamp shade provided by the hotel to relight the candle.

It seems another day had passed by in the blink of an eye.

Huanhan was still the same as always, taking care of matters related to Jiang Yinghe. He was warm, attentive and reliable...so how could he be trapped by his emotions?

He said that he had locked himself in a 'cage' of his own making, so who was his cage?

Jiang Yinghe stared for quite some time before suddenly asking, "Why aren't you two talking anymore?"

Li Huanhan had long since changed clothes. The scent of blood was no longer on his body but his eyes remained dark, as if they were pools of magma waiting to erupt.

"There is nothing to discuss between Shidi and I."

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. Weren't the two of you getting along like a house on fire just now? He then heard the chilly voice of little Chang Ye.

"Shizun wasn't listening, so there was no one to talk to."

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...You guys were talking to me?"

He somehow felt like they were competing for his affections.

Chang Ye continued to flip through his book without a care in the world. In his mind he had already diced Li Huanhan into a million pieces, but none of that showed in his casual demeanour.

"This disciple has nothing to say to a demonic cultivator."

Jiang Yinghe frowned slightly. "Ye-er, your Shixiong just made a mistake due to being trapped by his emotions..."

"Those willing to take Shizun to such a strange place without any consideration for the consequences are simply despicably greedy." Li Huanhan glared at his shidi.

Jiang Yinghe said with exasperation, "Huanhan, your Shidi did the best he could under the circumstances. And everything turned out fine in the end."

Other than the need to wear these ridiculous disguises, there wasn't much to complain about Wanyao City.

He was about to continue mediating when the system that had been playing dead this whole time pop up with a notification:

[Please check the new status bar.]

Jiang Yinghe paused. How many more status bars are there? He's already messed things up to this point, so was there really a way to bring it all back?

He absentmindedly clicked to open the detailed menu. There were new bars in black beneath the original three progress bars for his disciples.

Chang Ye's blackened status was only 50 while Qin Jun's was about 70. That made sense since he was an evil cultivator...

Jiang Yinghe glanced over to check Li Huanhan's new value.

...Ninety...nine? Oh, oh my...

He was absolutely stunned. He raised his head to look at Li Huanhan, who was pouring him a cup of tea. Other than the bright red demon markings, there was no visible sign that anything was wrong with him.

What kind of status bar was this?!

Author's Corner

He used every part of himself to love you.

Even using his last bit of warmth,

To soothe your fears.

Rain

Wow the author's note made me kind of sad. Also Li Huanhan is 99% blackened lol. I wonder what he'll do at 100...

Sahl

Jiang Yinghe: "Who is this monster toying with Huan-er's heart? I shall uproot him!"

Disciples: "..."

The author's note... I now feel better about my terrible bias towards Huanhan. My poor baby! *sobs*

OceanofPDF.com

CH36 - RUN OVER BY A CARRIAGE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe replaced the jade scroll he had been reading into his personal dimension.

He had taken out many records about becoming a demonic cultivator and internal demons. After perusing them, he reached an uncertain conclusion—

To have Huanhan recover his immortal cultivation, his internal demons needed to be dealt with first.

He still couldn't believe that someone like Li Huanhan would have an obsession severe enough to cause him to degenerate into a demonic cultivator.

Jiang Yinghe took out a new book and once again prepared to wrestle with the archaic characters written in it. As he flipped open the cover, he thought about the new status bars provided by the system.

Their black colour gave him an ominous feeling. Was Huanhan's condition really that severe?

Jiang Yinghe felt like he was missing something...

It was a good night to do business. The street outside of the inn was busy, with many devils talking and laughing amongst themselves. One can only imagine how much more bustling it was thousands of years ago, when the devil race was at their prime.

The book in his hands made mention of that time. It said that different factions of devils were engaged in an endless cycle of infighting and bloodshed. The newly crowned Devil King, Tianhou, was able to take the foundational treasure and cast the mighty Devil God into the Endless Sky Watchtower with one blow, but he also perished in the battle. Even since that conflict, the devil race gradually weakened and was forced to retreat from the four continents to the desolate Ancient Plains.

Although there was only a passing remark in the book, the period of history it described was very grim.

Jiang Yinghe refocused himself to find methods of dealing with internal demons—he wrote them down on the paper provided by the inn, but also inscribed them into his heart.

The paper used by the devil race was different from the kind used by humans. It was coarse and rough, and when ink met the paper it was faintly dyed red. Jiang Yinghe had been here long enough that his calligraphy flowed like water.

Just as he had written half a page of notes, he suddenly saw that there was a small green cup for him to wash his brush in beside the inkwell.

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes. After seeing Li Huanhan beside him, he said, "If you want to return to the righteous faction, you need to direct your demonic energy back into your foundation. You have the heavenly demon physique, so I'm afraid this will be difficult..."

He paused before saying, "Even if you succeed, it's likely that your cultivation will drop a level. Also...if your internal demons are not overcome, you will never be able to return."

Jiang Yinghe raised his head to meet those blood-red eyes. "Huanhan, tell me truthfully. Is your current appearance falsified in any way?"

Li Huanhan was not prepared to suddenly be questioned like this. Even his fingers shook. As if everything was fine, he pressed his hands against the cool sides of the porcelain cup. "Shizun..."

Jiang Yinghe knew from just a glance that the other person had not been entirely truthful. He frowned and, unusually for him, cut off his eldest disciple's words. "No excuses. I know that your internal demons are vicious. If a person's mental state was stable, how would they become a demonic cultivator?"

He sighed and continued to speak, "I have seen many evil demonic cultivators over the years. They may be strong, or weak, but all of them share a common characteristic... How can those of us who seek the Dao pass through our tribulations without a healthy mindset? Take that Xiao Xuanyu you saw some time ago. He was once a promising youth of the same generation as me."

"I sometimes still remember him as he was. But that doesn't mean I've forgotten his later defection to the demons and his crimes against the innocent." Jiang Yinghe put down his brush and continued solemnly, "To be too stubborn can sometimes warp one's perception...and then lead into a dead end."

He rarely spoke so much, but his tone was still soft and quiet. Jiang Yinghe raised his head to look at him. "Huanhan, it's okay to be wrong."

He went to hold Li Huanhan's hand which was still on the ink washing cup. He suddenly realised that his hand wasn't big enough to entirely cover the other person's.

"The journey that is cultivation is long and filled with misleading paths. Let Shizun guide you back." Jiang Yinghe said, "Don't try to endure everything by yourself. You can rely on me as well. There is always a way out. Now tell me, who is the one you like?"

There was no one in the world who could resist when the person they loved asked after them in such a tender manner...

Li Huanhan held his Shizun's hand in return. He felt the internal demon wrapped around his heart stir. It revealed its strong desire to rob him of his rationality.

Only he knew the sacrifices and pain needed to remain in control.

This person wanted to help him, but he was the source of his insanity and passion. There was a river of passionate magma just waiting to leak out of Li Huanhan's cold exterior.

Who would've thought that the first reaction of his dark and cruel soul to falling in love would be fear and caution?

Jiang Yinghe looked calmly at him, waiting for him to confess everything. But it just so happened that everything about him could not be said.

Li Huanhan was silent for a moment. His fingers lightly rubbed over Shizun's thin fingerbones. He said in a low voice, "You...can't feel anything?"

Jiang Yinghe's eyebrows raised in surprise.

Li Huanhan's presence slowly drifted over, like a kind invasion of his space. His blood-red eyes held a mysterious mirth. Other emotions were too difficult to discern.

"Shizun," His voice was slightly raspy, "you really don't feel anything at all?"

Jiang Yinghe was befuddled by his questions. He then heard his next words.

"...I don't know what else to say to convey it to you. Sometimes I feel like having emotions is the greatest weakness of all."

Jiang Yinghe slowly savoured his words and seemed to come to a realization. "...From your words, I should know this person..."

He remembered something. His mind began to connect the dots from long ago with the scene from yesterday. His brows furrowed as he cautiously asked, "Don't tell me you like Chang Ye?"

Li Huanhan blinked. "...What."

Jiang Yinghe thought he had guessed wrong from his reaction. "Nevermind, it's fine if you don't say it. I shouldn't be forcing you."

He took out the artifacts he had deemed the most suitable for calming the heart from his personal dimension. He picked out the dark red ring capable of suppressing internal demons and placed it in Li Huanhan's hand.

The material of the ring was both like jade and not. It was slightly cool to the touch and the most effective aid to becoming closer to the Dao in his personal collection. Jiang Yinghe made a hand sign to adjust the size of the ring before slipping it onto Li Huanhan's finger.

Li Huanhan was staring at him without a word. After Shizun finished putting it on him, he suddenly grabbed his fingers.

"Hiss—"

This wasn't the level of strength Hunahan usually used with him. Even the bones of his fingers were aching. Jiang Yinghe raised his head to see the previously calm demon markings spreading madly across his skin. The other person's blood-red gaze became more viscous and akin to the dark red of true blood.

But, after only an instant, the death grip on his hand vanished like it was just his imagination. Jiang Yinghe was shocked and subconsciously asked,"You, just now..."

He was interrupted by his eldest disciple suddenly embracing him from the side. Half of the papers on the table scattered to the floor. The voice by his ear became hoarse, but at the same time, his emotions appeared restrained and soft. He was like a qin string sharp enough to break skin that was currently soaked through with the blood of his player.

The pain came and went, dying everything red gradually.

"Sorry." Li Huanhan said, "Did I hurt you?"

Jiang Yinghe's temporary discomfort was nothing compared to how frightening his current mental state was. It was like the slightest touch was enough to set him off. This hug wasn't to comfort Jiang Yinghe, but himself.

Jiang Yinghe's cold fragrance, like always, was able to calm him down.

"This is nothing, but you..."

He felt something wasn't right and didn't push the other person away. Instead, he began to pat Huanhan on the back. He comforted him in a soothing manner. "Don't stress, I'm fine. Was that your internal demon?"

It looks like the status bar wasn't bugged after all. He was very dangerous right now.

"En."

Jiang Yinghe sighed and spoke softly. "Lan Ruo Temple has many artifacts like this. Abbot Chan Qing's personal artifact is meant to suppress internal demons. Why don't I accompany you there to borrow it for now?"

Li Huanhan replied after a brief silence. "En."

He was focused not on the 'artifact' part but the 'Shizun will accompany you' part. If it was like that, then Li Huanhan was willing to agree.

Jiang Yinghe had never faced such a prickly situation. It looks like teaching pupils in the cultivation world was much harder than on Earth. He never thought that the stoic and stubborn Li Huanhan would also have moments of vulnerability like this.

...But the root of all his troubles was still that person he liked. Was there anything wrong with his disciple? How was he not worthy?

Jiang Yinghe couldn't wrap his mind around it. He waited until his first disciple's breathing evened out before leaving his arms. He turned to see Chang Ye had arrived some time ago and was sitting on the bed cleaning his flute.

Chang Ye wore all red, his clothing vibrantly vivid. It complimented his extraordinary looks.

"Li-shixiong's current state..." Little Chang Ye put down the emerald flute in his hands to support his head and smile, "seems very dangerous."

It was fine when he didn't appear, but when Chang Ye came into his sight again, Jiang Yinghe suddenly questioned—if that black coloured status bar was representing the amount of repressed feelings, then what did that mean for his pure and easily misled little disciple?!

He might be in the best shape out of the three, but it was still half full, ah.

"Li-shixiong seems very much like a demonic cultivator as he is now." Chang Ye snorted, "How could you return to Shizun's side knowing your own situation? Aren't you afraid of doing something you'll forever regret during a qi deviation?"

Every one of his words pierced the most vulnerable part of Li Huanhan's heart. He then relaxed his turn to say to Jiang Yinghe, "Shizun, I heard that today was the Partner-finding Festival for the devils. There will be lots of little sprites out playing in hopes of finding a partner."

Jiang Yinghe was an introvert, so this didn't hold much interest to him. He was about to refuse when he heard Chang Ye's next words.

"...It would be good for Li-shixiong to go out and get some fresh air. No wonder he has internal demons if he's cooped up inside all day. Wouldn't it be a good thing if he met a little sprite that was more receptive to his advances?"

Jiang Yinghe's rejection remained unsaid. He turned to glance at Huanhan. "I thought it was best to keep a low profile..."

"It would be more suspicious if we didn't go." Chang Ye said with a smile, "Does Shizun have something against the devil race? Do you not like being surrounded by them?"

As he said this, the thick and furry tail behind him couldn't help but swish around in agitation like it was part of an antsy cat.

Jiang Yinghe knew that it was probably only Chang Ye wanting to go out and play, but he still agreed in the end. "I'm fine either way...alright then."

In his eyes, Chang Ye's happy smile was filled with an untested purity. But to Li Huanhan, this vicious beast was bearing its sharp incisors brimming with greed. His eyeballs were almost attached to Shizun's body.

He really should butcher him. The sooner the better.

—-

The devils' Partner-finding Festival was similar to the humans' Qixi Festival.

Jiang Yinghe went out with the two of them. On his left was the masked Chang Ye in red. On the right was the Li Huanhan with black clothes and blood-coloured eyes. He didn't feel like anything was wrong with the three of them walking together.

When it came to matters like this, his brain reacted slowly. How could he have remained single on Earth and all the way until now otherwise? The removal of his passion root only made things worse.

But Jiang Yinghe knew none of this. He was originally uninterested, but as he passed by the stalls selling various baubles, he had a change in attitude. Since he was in Wanyao City and so far from his home, there was no need to restrain himself for the sake of Peng Lai or his own reputation. He browsed several more stalls along the way.

The devil race really sold everything. There were specially-made shark people tears, white bone sprite tears, a mirror used by an ancient archdevil...and loads of other novelties all piled up.

Jiang Yinghe paused in front of a deer devil to pick out some special transmission tablets that could lock onto a target. It was when he went to

pay with spirit stones that he noticed the merchant's curious and admiring gaze.

Jiang Yinghe asked in passing, "Is there something wrong?"

The deer devil only grew more excited when he heard his voice. He shuffled over with bright eyes and asked in a small voice, "Can I ask you something?"

"...Sure."

The deer devil shifted the antlers on his head and swallowed his saliva. He asked, "Are you carrying cubs right now?"

Jiang Yinghe paused. He didn't understand his meaning. "What?"

"Why else would both of your companions be following you around, ah?" The shopkeeper stared at his long, snow white ears with his wide doe eyes. His tone was as serious as could be. "I can tell from a glance that they're both vicious devil beasts, the kind that's likely to get a rabbit for a partner!"

The shopkeep bent down to retrieve something from his wares. He rambled on, "One should be enough to guard you at the festival, but two? You must be carrying a bun in your oven, right? ...I'm telling you, don't go anywhere too crowded or even two won't be enough to keep an eye on you."

Jiang Yinghe's mind was completely blank. He managed to stammer out, "Two, two what?"

"Companions." The deer devil said matter-of-factly. "Isn't your species able to take two at once? Your devilish aura is so faint ah. You must work very hard every night right?"

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

He felt like he was run over by a carriage.

The shopkeep mistook his silence for embarrassment, so he presented the item in the box he had fished out along with the transmission tablet Jiang

Yinghe had bought. It was a small ceramic jar with an illustration of a chrysanthemum.

"Don't be shy." The antlers on top of his head swayed as he moved around. His voice was filled with admiration. "I heard that Devil Baron Sanqing forced a rabbit sprite the other day. There's nothing us herbivores can do about those carnivores... But those two seem to treasure you like that, so I take it that your feelings are mutual?"

He pointed at the small ceramic jar. He had nothing but good intentions as he said, "A gift for you. I used to sell this stuff and this was left over. Also...aren't you guys looking for a partner year-round? I heard you can do it with any kind of devil beast, so if you want a break from those two I can introduce you to a..."

Jiang Yinghe was almost numb at this point. His three views had already been shaken beyond repair. Huanhan and Chang Ye were originally only glancing at him from afar while he bought stuff, but when the shopkeep said something like 'introduce', Jiang Yinghe immediately felt his disciples' glares behind him.

...Little Chang Ye hasn't even settled on his orientation yet, so what was this?

Maybe because it was too obvious, but even this chatterbug of a shopkeep felt a chill run down his spine. The sense of imminent danger made him stop talking.

Jiang Yinghe looked at this 'well-intentioned gift'. He didn't want it, but he couldn't throw it away either. He heard the deer devil whisper some tips on its usage.

"If you smear some of this there...even two won't make you hurt."

Jiang Yinghe choked on air. He only recovered after quite a while. Then he angrily said, "...They don't dare to hurt me in the first place!"

The deer shopkeep was taken aback. Then his expression changed to one of quiet understanding, "Ah! So you're a professional!"

Author's Corner

HeHe: Does your devil race not distinguish between males and females?!

Rain

Everyone other than Jiang Yinghe can pick up on that tension, even literal strangers on the street lol.

Sahl

Thank you to everyone for your lovely ongoing comments, it's awesome to see everyone sharing this ride with Rain and I!

Deer demons, helping the course of true love run smooth. And by smooth I mean, ahem, smooooth.

I love all the disciples, but Huanhan is just that bit more sensitive and caring...

Did I also mention I have LWJ level love of rabbits?

OceanofPDF.com

CH37 - SO COLD (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

It was the first time Jiang Yinghe faced this kind of inexplicable situation.

He didn't think this would happen when he bought those fake wolf ears for Huanhan.

Jiang Yinghe felt irritated that the two of them were dressed up as carnivores while Ye-er just had to get him a pair of rabbit ears. He couldn't help but object. "What do you mean by 'professional'. We're just living together and nothing more."

The smile on the shopkeeper's face froze. He looked at him like he was a ten year old rabbit that had been abducted by strange uncles. He snuck another glance at the two predators and whispered, "Living together when they're not your companions? Pretty rabbit, aren't you being too obtuse?"

...Who are you calling a pretty rabbit?

Jiang Yinghe took in a deep breath. As he thought, it was impossible to converse with this person. He could only say, "I will be careful. Thank you for your gift."

The deer devil had no idea that he had touched a sore spot. He rambled on in a friendly manner, "No need to thank me. Take care!"

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly and returned to his disciples. He stored away the transmission tablets that he purchased along with that small jar.

Li Huanhan spoke, "Shizun spoke with him for so long." He tilted his head, then asked, "What did you buy?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't believe that he didn't hear their conversation from such a short distance away. He recalled what the shopkeep was just talking about, and pieces began to fit together in his head. He paused before asking, "Haven't you always been listening in?"

Li Huanhan did not hide it. He ducked his head a fraction and said, "Shizun is truly beautiful."

Jiang Yinghe, "...If your mouth is so sweet, why don't you say this to the one that caused your internal demons?"

Pah, this child is still useless.

He was about to start on Chang Ye when his mouth was stuffed full with a sweet pastry.

Little Chang Ye's eyes curled into crescents as he fed Shizun a piece of the cake he had bought on the way. He shuffled over. "Is it good?"

After taking a bite of the pastry in his mouth, the sugary taste made him forget what he wanted to say. The little disciple in front of him took advantage of his distraction to get closer. Red lips alighted on his own like a dragonfly skimming over water, licking off the crumbs.

Before Jiang Yinghe could react, a sonic boom exploded from beside his ear. A sword that was red from head to toe cut through the air from his other side. It brushed against Chang Ye's chin and severed several strands of hair. Half an inch lower and it would have pierced his shoulder.

Li Huanhan's gaze was dark. There was a cold smile on his lips. "Are you trying to provoke me?"

Chang Ye licked his lips like nothing was wrong. He smiled, "Isn't Shixiong being a bit harsh? You've already degenerated into a demonic cultivator due to internal demons, so you hardly need my help. Besides, you already have someone in your heart, so what does it matter to you if I tease Shizun?"

Li Huanhan's glare only grew more frigid. The Jimie sword in his hands let out a low roar, following its master's intentions. Just as the tense atmosphere was about to come to a head, a person suddenly stumbled out of the busy crowds straight towards Jiang Yinghe.

He immediately withdrew his sword and reached to shield his Shizun behind him.

Jiang Yinghe was pulled back a step by him before he saw the jackal devil that had emerged from the sea of people. He sniffed the air and circled around as if he was attracted here by a scent. He bared his teeth in a grin.

"A rabbit sprite?" He was practically drooling, "However much they're paying you, I'll double it if you come with me!"

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...Are all of you so prejudiced against rabbit devils?"

The jackal laughed wickedly. "You guys are always in heat anyways. Why else would a beauty like you hang around two men?"

This jackal seems to have had too much to drink. He smelled strongly of alcohol, and his saliva was almost freely flowing at this point. He reminded Jiang Yinghe of the demonic cultivators that would covet him when he just started cultivating...

But they all fell under Wangchen's edge.

He couldn't do that here. It was devil territory after all. Jiang Yinghe was thinking about how to resolve this situation quietly when he saw Li Huanhan stab the man to death in front of him.

Jiang Yinghe blinked again. "...Good job."

He couldn't blame Huanhan for being protective of him, but it was obvious that his internal demons had made him more impulsive.

He took Li Huanhan's hand and began to massage it soothingly. "Don't be angry, I'm fine."

Li Huanhan's blackened status bar oscillated between 97% and 100% right before Jiang Yinghe's eyes. It was only after he said a few words of comfort that it held steady at the lower end of the spectrum. He withdrew his blood sword.

Jiang Yinghe let out a sigh of relief. He then heard Huanhan bite out his words with thinly-veiled hostility. "This is the place you chose?"

He was speaking to Chang Ye.

Chang Ye swept his gaze over the body on the ground. He looked away without any emotion. "I've troubled Shixiong. However..."

His last word was drawn out. He leisurely raised his eyes to reveal a delicate smile. "Li-shixiong, it seems you've attracted attention."

Blood seeped into the ground.

Jiang Yinghe glanced around to see the originally noisy street in complete silence. The devils surrounding them peered at them with frightened eyes before scurrying away in all directions. The next moment, a shrill scream resonated from somewhere within Wanyao City. The pressure that only an archdevil could exude seemed to be awakened by the fresh blood and could be felt everywhere.

"—Who dares to resort to violence in my territory?"

The presence of someone at the Hollowed Cave stage approached.

Jiang Yinghe's heart skipped a beat. He immediately thought of the Devil Baron Sanqing who guarded Wanyao City. He stepped forward and pulled Li Huanhan behind him. He was still acting like he should shield the two of them.

His actions were too well rehearsed. Li Huanhan was unused to protecting others, Shizun was the first. But for Jiang Yinghe, he had stood before the entire Peng Lai sect since a long time ago. His reputation that preceded him was enough to shield them.

Jiang Yinghe's devilish aura was weak, which made him appear to be an easy target. However, there was the concealed scent of an immortal on him. It was faint and cold but alluring at the same time.

Devil Baron Sanqing arrived brimming with anger. He wanted to see who was foolish enough to commit murder during the Partner-finding Festival under his watch. He immediately saw a rabbit devil dressed entirely in pastel colours standing in front. His black hair seemed to be coated with lacquer, and his eyes were like icy stars.

Hiss—where did this beauty come from?

Sanqing came to a stop. He wasn't sure if he should keep roaring in his naturally loud voice anymore. He glanced at the incomplete corpse of the jackal that had been severed by a single sword strike. He was just about to put on the airs of a Devil Baron when the devilish scent of the 'weak' rabbit in front of him became more and more faint.

What took its place was the vibrant but inviolable presence of an immortal. Spiritual energy surrounded Jiang Yinghe as he raised his hands to summon a completely snow white longsword. Its thin yet sharp edge glinted under the moonlight.

His level rose from that of a mortal all the way until he was at equal footing with Sanqing, at the Hollowed Cave stage.

Devil Baron Sanqing forcefully put the brakes on whatever he was about to say. He was shocked as he took in Jiang Yinghe's appearance that was reminiscent of frost and snow. He glanced over the snow sword in his hand before hesitantly enquiring, "...Xuan Wei Xianjun?"

Jiang Yinghe single handedly withdrew his sword and slammed it into the ground. He calmly stated, "This master came here to sightsee with my disciples only to meet a foul-mouthed wretch who offended me. Will the Devil Baron interfere?"

Sanqing was literally stunned into silence. After he confirmed it was really him, his mouth moved on its own, "Why is Xianjun here?!"

Jiang Yinghe was surprised. "...What's wrong?"

"Fuck me sideways..." Sanqing picked up the jackal by his collar and took a breath. "That Half-step Golden Immortal ghost cultivator has been flipping the cultivation world over looking for you, and you were in my Wanyao City this whole time?!"

He anxiously paced around before saying, "Don't blame me Xianjun, our races have long had an agreement in place. Jiuying broke the treaty because of his own impatience. I'm nothing like him. But that ghost cultivator, it's like he's gone mad. He..."

Sanqing looked around while he spoke. After he just happened to meet the eyes of the youth in red behind Jiang Yinghe who was smiling at him, his words came to a sudden halt. He was so scared that his knees gave out on him and he collapsed into a kneeling position with a thud.

Jiang Yinghe was listening attentively. Just as he reached the important part, this Hollowed Cave stage devil cultivator for some reason kneeled without hesitation!

Everyone around them was also staring.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He saw the seemingly thick-faced Devil Baron Sanqing try to get up, only to be crushed back down by an unseen force.

Jiang Yinghe reached out hesitantly, "...Devil Baron. Is there a problem with your legs?"

He had to ask because this was just too ridiculous. Chang Ye's lively laughter sounded from behind him.

Little Chang Ye stepped closer to crouch in front of Devil Baron Sanqing. He hit the flute in his hand against his palm. He was smiling lightly. "Is there any reason my Shizun can't be here?"

There was no way Sanqing could say no. If he knew this venerated one was here, then he would've never thought about chasing them away. Ever since the ancient archdevil awoke in the Frozen Plains a hundred years ago, the devil race had held countless emergency meetings to discuss what to do. They left those meetings trembling, with no plan at all.

No one knew what this ancestor that had revived after thousands of years from the darkest part of their history wanted to do. Did he still have the necessary cruelty to settle the infighting among their race through bloodshed? Or have his sights shifted to uniting the entire cultivation world?

Sanqing swallowed nervously. He stammered in the language of the devils, "Of co-course he can. Ancestor, please calm down..."

The previously smiling youth suddenly became cold. With extreme disdain, he said, "What are you talking about? I'm still young."

Sanqing nodded vigorously. "...Okay."

—-

Sanqing saw them off in an overly friendly manner afterwards.

Even Jiang Yinghe felt that something wasn't right... Devil Baron Sanqing could be considered part of the moderate faction among the devils and he was an outspoken and magnanimous person. But there was no need to have such a servile attitude towards them.

In the end, he was still more concerned with the news of Qin Jun and the current state of the cultivation world.

According to the information that Devil Baron Sanqing had brought back, Qin Jun had no intention of giving up. In the past few days, he's turned the cultivation world on its head. The ghost cultivators came out in droves and even managed to overwhelm many of the smaller sects. Every day, even more resentful ghosts arrived under the orders of the Spirit Patriarch.

It made his head hurt.

Cold moonlight splashed onto Jiang Yinghe's pastel robes and the pair of snow white rabbit ears in his inky black hair.

He had been sitting on the roof of the hotel for a while. The wind helped bring order to his troubled thoughts.

It was not just the news about Qin Jun that troubled him. The main problem was with the other two...Li Huanhan and Chang Ye. Their efforts to express their affections have become increasingly transparent. All of Jiang Yinghe's moments of pondering and suspicions have led him to tonight's conclusion.

He slowly retraced his thoughts to Huanhan and Ye-er's conversation today, paying particular attention to their actions and behaviour. He then recalled even further back to the argument a few days ago...Jiang Yinghe's temples began to throb the more he remembered. It was like thousands of years of emotional awareness were stuck behind a dam in his head.

But even through the blockage, Jiang Yinghe could make out a part of the truth.

The night wind was cold as it brushed by his ears.

Jiang Yinghe thought that his hands were cold as well.

He touched the ears on his head like he wanted to tear them off. He left them alone in the end. It was better to take off their disguises once they had left the city.

Jiang Yinghe admonished himself in silence—It wasn't enough to ruin one of them, he had to mislead all three? And all of them liked him?

This was truly a low point in his teaching career.

Jiang Yinghe looked at the moon for a while before he stared at the progress bar that had remained stagnant for so long. He sighed, "What kind of Shizun are you."

He heard familiar footsteps approaching from behind.

Li Huanhan sat down beside him and draped a warm black cloak over Jiang Yinghe's shoulders. It strongly contrasted against his demure clothing.

"You'll catch a cold." Li Huanhan said.

"En." Jiang Yinghe made a noise of agreement. Without looking at him, he asked, "Why did you get angry today?"

He was referring to when Chang Ye kissed him. Huanhan's rage and jealousy was betrayed by the intense roar of his weapon.

Li Huanhan turned his head to glance at the other person's stunning jawline. He lightly asked, "If Shizun's asking me this, then have you finally realised it?"

"I'm slow, not dumb." Jiang Yinghe lowered his eyes, "So it was all for my sake..."

Huanhan's internal demons, his descent into demonic cultivation, him locking himself into a cage of his own making, his suffering day in and day out...All of it was because of him?

Even now he couldn't quite believe it... The other person had a bright future. He was the one who raised Huanhan up, but also the one who ruined him.

Li Huanhan did not reply.

"I had my suspicions before." Jiang Yinghe yawned into his hand, "But I never followed up on them. About what you asked before, whether I could feel it, I really..."

...couldn't feel a thing.

But before he could finish, his hands were captured into another pair. Warm fingers massaged his cold ones.

The things that he had gotten used to over time now made Jiang Yinghe somewhat apprehensive. He turned to look at Li Huanhan. It was only due to the moonlight that he could see his dark as blood eyes.

"Let's try one more time." Li Huanhan said.

His voice was quiet and raspy, but also steady as if it was just a casual statement. If Jiang Yinghe couldn't see the rapidly fluctuating status bar, he would've taken his words at face value.

The other's presence drew closer.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to protest and reject him, but it was like he was already so tolerant of this person that he couldn't even voice a single complaint. He stiffly watched as he leaned over. His heart was speeding up.

He could feel that the other person was very nervous, the hands holding his had a layer of sweat on them. But Huanhan's outward appearance remained as unshakeable as always.

Jiang Yinghe felt a strange emotion well up in him—but like every time before, the scalding feeling only persisted for a moment before fading away.

His lips touched the warm mouth of another person.

But his heart continued to fall and sink until it was colder than ice.

—-

Li Huanhan kissed him very carefully. He was just as cautious that night back at Qing Jing Peak—as if he was secretly kissing a priceless treasure. The sleeping Jiang Yinghe even responded slightly.

But now...he could sense Shizun's icy demeanour and his unchanged mood.

Li Huanhan stilled. He separated their lips. His eyes darkened as he looked up towards Jiang Yinghe's face.

The moonlight made his eyes sparkle like stars. But they were the same as always, distant and clear, without a single ripple of emotion.

He heard Jiang Yinghe's belated and troubled voice.

"...Huanhan, I can't feel anything."

This reminded Li Huanhan of the most helpless and lonely time of his past life. It was just like this...he had nothing. There was no sound or light around him.

Shizun didn't care for him in the same way...

There was nothing between them.

Author's Corner

HeHe could only watch as his eldest disciple's status bar completely blackened.

[A kind reminder from the system: Activating the small dark room phase]

HeHe: !!!

Rain

Jiang Yinghe's not having a great time right now... He's fleeing from one disciple to another, but it's like going from the frying pan into the fire lol.

Guys, school has been kicking my butt lately so I need to buckle down and focus on that for a while. Starting today, updates will be every Saturday for PISDD. There will be a chapter this Saturday as well to tide you over. Thanks for understanding. (∀)

Sahl

Love the Demon Lord! 😂 Ah! Poor Huanhan...Just needs Shizun's love to be a good boi.

OceanofPDF.com

CH38 - HAVE MERCY (Draft)

Long overdue, but thank you Samantha for the Ko-fi!

Editor: Sahloknir

The night wind was cold.

Li Huanhan's hold on his fingers jolted.

Just as Jiang Yinghe tried to think of something to say, the always silent Little Jiang Shizun System suddenly popped out with a friendly reminder:

[Congratulations on unlocking the small dark room phase!]

He paused and finally realised the status bar that was precariously hovering at 97 had suddenly jumped to a stable 100!

Jiang Yinghe had a bad feeling about this.

...Why did this kind of thing need to be congratulated? System, are you really made to guide disciples?

He looked at Li Huanhan, who appeared the same as always. Only his eyes were slowly becoming deeper and darker, like a pool of congealed blood.

Jiang Yinghe felt a chill run down his spine. He was afraid of his eldest disciple for the first time. Almost unconsciously, he stepped back as a metallic scent similar to blood wafted through the air.

He was only able to retreat a few steps before the other person embraced him tightly. Jiang Yinghe could hear what sounded like flowing water

nearby. The brutally cold scent of blood continued to spread as a thick cloud of demonic energy enveloped them.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to speak, but he suddenly noticed the originally normal ground began to leak beads of blood. They converged into streams coming from all directions, then an entire pool was formed.

A fact that laid neglected in his mind suddenly jumped out—gathering blood into a pool to traverse to various locations, wasn't that one of the signature techniques of the Xuehe Demon Lord from a thousand years ago? Although other demonic cultivators have tried to copy or reverse-engineer it, not one of them was able to replicate the details.

The Xuehe Demon Lord from a millennium ago...also had the heavenly demon physique and naturally red eyes.

Jiang Yinghe snapped his head up to look into that darkly amused crimson gaze. He heard his disciple's hoarse voice.

"Come back with me."

His tone was as calm and cool as usual. But this time Li Huanhan's words were no longer a question, but a demand.

At the same time, Li Huanhan's hidden cultivation progress was revealed. Just like that day when Qin Jun recovered his true body in front of him, his power that was restrained at the Nascent Soul stage began to rise. A short time later, Jiang Yinghe met another Half-step Golden Immortal.

"You..." Jiang Yinghe's brain that just recovered was scrambled once again. His words were caught in his throat before he managed to force them out. "Weren't you possessed by your internal demons after your tribulation?"

His first disciple was a demonic cultivator from the start.

Li Huanhan did not reply and instead calmly embraced him. The air around them was filled with so much demonic energy that it was hard to breath.

Jiang Yinghe's mental state was a mess. The person before him was not his precious disciple.

The blood gathered from all the corners of the rooms to creep up Jiang Yinghe's snow white sleeves like a living creature. Jiang Yinghe could hear Li Huanhan's heartbeat from how close they were—it was steady, unlike before.

"You were also deceiving me?" Jiang Yinghe didn't know how he could ask this. What kind of luck did he have to attract so many Half-step Golden Immortals? Was this a coincidence or were they as common as rice?

Usually, he would hear Li Huanhan's explanations and clarifications, but now he could only feel the heavy air that the other radiated.

"Shizun," He still called him that, and his tone was as soft as it always was, "I'm going to take you away from here."

Their minds weren't even on the save wavelength.

Jiang Yinghe ached from his tight embrace. He was just a Hollowed Cave cultivator so his foundation was almost stagnant after being suppressed by the Half-step Golden Immortal. Those blood vines ensnared his body like a vibrantly red cage.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't break free. He turned his head and said, "Li Huanhan."

He rarely called out the full name of his eldest disciple, and it felt strange on his tongue. This didn't stop the fury burning in Jiang Yinghe's heart. Gritting his teeth, he spoke again, "Must I return your feelings if you like me? The centuries we've spent together as master and disciple have all been tainted!"

He didn't know why he was so angry. After all, he had already gone through this once with Qin Jun. But even so, the pain in his heart was hard to bear.

"Qin Jun wants to eat me, so what about you? You just want to sleep with me?" Jiang Yinghe was so angry that his words came out in rapid succession, "If it's like this, then tell me, are all of you lying to me? Not only you, but also Chang Ye?"

Li Huanhan's silence was frightening. There was only the demonic energy permeating his surroundings and the demon markings that reached down to his chest that held a sickening degree of resemblance to trails of blood.

Almost like validation to his suspicions, Chang Ye's voice rang out from mid air with a fierce rage that he had never shown before.

"Li Huanhan, have you lost your fucking mind?!"

The entirety of Wanyao City had been awakened by the violent waves of demonic energy. Then the inhabitants were reduced to shivering lumps by the sudden devilish energy that followed.

Chang Ye wore an all-red outfit. The emerald flute in his hand transformed into a jade-like dagger. He seemed to have rushed here after sensing the demonic energy.

The protective seal between his brows glowed silver intermittently. A cold aura surrounded him. That beautifully unique face had a rare yet extreme aggressiveness on display. It was like an evil devil dressed up as a young beast was provoked to the point that it bared its fangs hatefully.

The Duanshe Li sword in his hand swung right at Li Huanhan's back, but it only managed to reduce the front desk into rubble and pierce deep into the wall.

The blood pool had formed. He disappeared with Jiang Yinghe the same way that he had appeared.

Chang Ye has always been a mastermind who thought thousands of steps ahead. This was the first time that another person had been able to so thoroughly disrupt his preparations. If everything had gone according to the original plan, he would have countless plots to keep Shizun at his side.

The wind was howling under the cold moon.

Chang Ye glared at the severed pieces of the front desk as he descended from midair. He repressed his rage with an iron grip as he furiously slammed Duanshe Li deep into the ground. A fearsome and overwhelming devilish energy bled into the surroundings. The entire population of Wanyao City were scared stiff by the presence of a pureblood. They dropped to their knees and prayed for salvation.

...This lunatic!

He shouldn't have let Shizun leave his sight. Li Huanhan might appear normal, but his brain was more messed up than anyone's!

Chang Ye closed his eyes and let out a breath. He reined in his anxiety bit by bit before pulling Duanshe Li out of the ground to look at Devil Baron Sanqing who had hurried over.

"Ancestor..." Sanqing peered fearfully at the fractured ground, "Jiang Xianjun has..."

He shut his mouth with a single glance from Chang Ye.

After peeling back his disguise, the normally pure and obedient youth revealed the brutal monster raised in a dark era within.

"Li Huanhan." Chang Ye repeated his name as if he wanted to tear it to pieces. The anger in his chest had not completely subsided, and the tail on the ground had every hair follicle standing on end, doubling in size.

If the person that he couldn't bear to force was hurt by that demonic cultivator...

Chang Ye put a hand to his forehead as he felt his eyebrows start to twitch. His heart that contained the instinctual wants and desires of an animal was furiously beating as well.

Devil Baron Sanqing was getting a migraine from all the devilish energy leaking out of his ancient ancestor. He straightened his collar nervously and

hesitated before speaking, "Ancestor, that demonic cultivator has kidnapped Jiang Xianjun...what should we do?"

Chang Ye pressed down on his brows and only raised his head after a while. His voice was returning to normal when he suddenly asked, "...What time does your younger brother return?"

Sanqing said, "Wu Chengyu? He's not in Wanyao City right now. Is there a reason that Ancestor is asking for him?"

"Pass on a message to him." Chang Ye said, "My Shishu is with him. Tell him to release him. There's no need to put him under surveillance anymore."

Sanqing was shocked. He stammered out, "Um...that man is your, your Shishu?"

Chang Ye wasn't interested in this topic. He returned the emerald longsword in his hand to its flute form before tying it to his side. Only then did he raise his head and ask, "What about it?"

Sanqing didn't dare to tell his Ancestor when he was radiating killing intent like this that...his little brother has taken this Ancestor's Shishu as his wife for long enough to cook rice.

He hit himself on the head before following Chang Ye. He leaned in and asked, "Ancestor, what should we do now ah? Should we steal Jiang Xianjun back or unite the cultivation world..."

He saw a sick smile appear on Chang Ye's beautiful face.

"We'll be going to the Nether Realm," he said, "to pay a visit to my dear Qin-shixiong—"

"I need to see for myself..." The smile on his lips grew wider as his words sent goosebumps down everyone's spine, "Does he want to hack me to pieces more or join forces with me to kill Li Huanhan first?"

—-

Jiang Yinghe began to question his life for the 101st time.

He tossed and turned on the bed aimlessly as he stared at the completely blackened status bar. Then his gaze shifted over to the small candle by the window.

He feels like he got caught up in a serial kidnapping case.

The perpetrator was the disciple he personally raised.

At first, he was shocked, regretful and angry...but after half the night had passed he managed to reach some semblance of calmness.

The bedding that Jiang Yinghe was lying on was very soft. There were many layers arranged on it, and the blanket was made from an extremely valuable material. The embroidery was top-notch and the vibrant colours were carefully selected to give off a surreal yet realistic flair.

He felt like he was in a surreal reality too.

He was in the Tiao Muo School Sect Master's palace, sitting on Li Huanhan's bed. The Blood Pool was bubbling merrily to one side, its depths glowing with a deep red light. Opposite to that was a small candle covered by a lampshade with illustrations of green mountains and graceful cranes, just like the one back on Qing Jing Peak.

That wasn't the most ridiculous thing.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand, which caused the light sound of his shackles colliding to echo through the room. He stared at the narrow wrist before him that had an unremovable restriction artifact secured to it. The chain went all the way to the peak of this palace. Even if the metal ring wasn't tight and didn't really touch his skin at all, there was no way to take it off.

...Ridiculous.

Li Huanhan was just at his side a moment ago. He personally secured this restriction artifact. Even if Jiang Yinghe wanted to make a move against

him he couldn't. With this thing on, the other's cultivation was able to fully suppress his.

At the time Jiang Yinghe was furious and rebuked him harshly. In the end, the other party still locked him up without a hint of hesitation or emotion.

Jiang Yinghe laid on the bed as he reviewed the scenes from before. He tried to find a silver lining in all this... That wasn't Li Huanhan anymore, but Niohuru Huanhan... His kind and caring nature was all a fucking sham.

His unrequited feelings, self-imprisonment and internal demons would be explainable if he had his eyes on a world-class beauty, but Jiang Yinghe was an old man! How was he worth all this effort? How did someone that seemed fine blacken to this degree?!

Jiang Yinghe restlessly rolled over again to stare at the small candle for a while. Then his eyes were suddenly covered as a familiar voice spoke.

"Don't look at it anymore. It's bad for your eyes."

...Fuck, he can't even hear Li Huanhan when he comes back anymore.

Li Huanhan and Qin Jun were cut from the same cloth. His little disciple was probably not much better. The last time he saw Chang Ye before he was taken away from Wanyao City, his strength was much greater than a fully-fledged Golden Core cultivator.

This Shizun...probably couldn't beat any of them.

Jiang Yinghe's eyes fluttered shut. The embers of his anger began to burn anew. He said coldly, "You've already done so much, so why pretend to care?"

The hand in front of his eyes slowly withdrew. The deceptively strong fingers moved his head so that Jiang Yinghe was no longer in front of the light.

These familiar small movements triggered Jiang Yinghe's memories.

He looked up to see that the demon markings that were at Li Huanhan's neck had fully encircled his heart. His blood-red eyes were still occasionally filled with a dark light.

Jiang Yinghe avoided his hands. "I see you all as just my disciples. That is why I've protected and loved you three for so long. You...must I choose one of you?"

He tried using sweet words to touch the other person and maybe pull back the black status bar an inch.

But it fell on deaf ears. Jiang Yinghe could clearly hear the metallic sound of his shackles being unlocked in this dimly lit environment.

His heart clenched. Suddenly his foot was grabbed and stripped bare.

Jiang Yinghe's body was lithe and toned. It was even more apparent after taking off some of his clothes the narrow line his calves struck to his heel. His foot was tense. It was the same sheen of white as his entire body.

All cultivators have cleansed their meridians and washed their marrow clean. Most of the impurities in their bodies have been eliminated already. Their cultivation usually had no scent. Only a select few individuals were different due to factors related to their body, their techniques and how they cultivate. This was true for both men and women.

After cultivating for a thousand years, Jiang Yinghe's body could be described as a frosty piece of jade. His bones were narrow. When Li Huanhan held his heel, he was dominated completely and unable to move even a single inch.

He anxiously tugged on the limb but he was unable to extract it. Then he heard a crisp sound as something cold clicked onto his skin. The metal chain shifted.

...He left for so long to get something like this?!

Jiang Yinghe felt his blood pressure rise. He slapped the bed. "You have to chain me there too?!"

Li Huanhan gazed down at him as he nodded calmly like he usually did. If it wasn't for the continued movements of his hands, Jiang Yinghe might be deceived into thinking he was a true gentleman.

After Jiang Yinghe hit the bedding, the chain on his hand clinked and joined the restraint on his ankle in a cold melody.

Li Huanhan was steadfast. He fastened the restriction artifact he had retrieved to the other snow-white ankle as well. He quietly said, "...Now Shizun can't be lured away by anyone."

Jiang Yinghe choked as he thought back to how he and Chang Ye escaped from the Nether Realm before. He had a suspicion that Li Huanhan was trying to provoke him.

"I've set up many dimensional and misdirection arrays here." Li Huanhan said lightly, "No one can find Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe pulled his ankle out of his grasp. He was annoyed by how loud his restraints were. With a dark face, he asked, "Isn't this Tian Muo School's territory?"

"They look alike, right?" Li Huanhan continued, "Don't worry Shizun. It's completely safe here."

...How can it be safe?! You're clearly the biggest security concern here!

Jiang Yinghe sighed deeply. He thought back to the words that Sword Saint Taichu had carved. A strange sense of confidence filled him.

If that senior was able to predict the small dark room phase, then was he also right about him not being forced...?

Just as he became distracted, he was brought back to reality by the frighteningly calm voice of his eldest disciple.

"There's one more place that needs to be locked up."

Jiang Yinghe had a very bad feeling about this. He cautiously shifted back several paces until his back met a corner. Then he saw the...metal ring.

...Fuck.

"Have, have mercy.." Jiang Yinghe's eyes were fixated upon the thing in his hand, "Li Huanhan, it won't fit, I can't, I..."

He almost seemed to forget that the disguise on his head was not removed yet. That pair of bunny ears that moved according to his emotions shuddered before curling up in embarrassment and fear.

Author's Corner

Bunny ears: QAQ

Bunny tail: QAAAAAQ

HeHe: ...Why are you two so scared?! I'm the one that should be scared, ah! Me!

Rain

Adding onto Author's Corner...

Bunny d***: QAAAAAAAQ (sorry not sorry _(:3 ∠)_)

Sahl

Jiang Yinghe, tied up in Huanhan's bed...why do I feel things are about to get really interesting?!

OceanofPDF.com

CH39 - LISTEN TO ME, ALRIGHT? (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The vividly red orbs in the Blood Pool slowly rose to the surface.

The crisp sound of chains clinking could be heard in the spacious palace, along with a hushed conversation.

"...It's not going to fit...Li Huanhan! Can't you calm down for just a minute?"

Yet the person in front of him seemed perfectly rational. His eyebrows were calm and his blood-red eyes were steady. It was only when he looked over that a ripple could be detected from the iced over pools.

Jiang Yinghe shifted to one side of the bed until he reached the corner. He almost fell off before Li Huanhan pulled him back by his heel.

The inky black clothing mixed with an expanse of white. Li Huanhan knew Jiang Yinghe's preferred style of clothes like the back of his hand. He had followed Jiang Yinghe for more than two centuries, so they had time to influence each other's habits until they were similar.

A slender finger pulled apart the belt tying his robes together. The outer layer fell off.

Before, when he was ignorant towards his disciples' intentions, Jiang Yinghe could accept this. But now—

Huanhan's movements weren't aggressive, but there was no way to break free. Jing Yinghe could only watch as he rubbed that thing a few times. Layers of demonic script flashed by.

"Li Huanhan?" The shackles made a racket. Jiang Yinghe's voice was growing hoarse as the corners of his eyes slowly turned red, "...Are you mute now?"

The other person paused for a moment before continuing. His body came closer. It was filled with the sadistic and dark air of the battlefield.

Jiang Yinghe held his wrist. He couldn't think of anything more threatening to say, so he was forced to back down for now. He gently lowered his voice as he spoke, "...Huanhan. You...don't hurt me."

Maybe this olive branch reached Li Huanhan, but he finally broke his silence and tilted his head in to kiss Shizun's misty eyelashes. "Alright."

Jiang Yinghe looked down and allowed himself to be kissed. Then he stared at the 100% blackened status bar. Even though he couldn't refuse, he still asked the question he was puzzling over. "Why are you locking this part up?"

The other person was silent for so long that Jiang Yinghe thought he wasn't going to reply. Only then did he hear Li Huanhan's quiet answer.

"I don't want...Shizun to have a reaction when thinking of someone else."

Jiang Yinghe's eyes gradually widened. "Who would I think about? I, I'm clearly dedicated to cultivating and teaching, even though it seems I didn't do a good job raising you guys..."

Before he could finish, he felt the other person's hands work more forcefully at stripping off his clothing. His waist urgently contracted as he fell without resistance back onto the bed. Jiang Yinghe lay there, staring up at the light red canopy. His heart was about to beat out of his chest.

...Huanhan's actions were way too stimulating.

Like a rock at the sea's edge, kissed by the sun, every part of him contained an intense heat as Huanhan's slender fingers slid over his skin under his inner robes. The stars in the night sky of his personal cosmos moved erratically, flashing through all the colours of the rainbow before dimming and leaving a blazing trail of colour. They dispersed across his consciousness as though a meteor shower rained in his head.

He breathed out.

Even his breath was boiling hot.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his shaking hand. He felt like his head was still filled with stars as he struggled to control his breathing. The noisy sound of chains was all he could hear. It was only when his fingers combed through his hair that he discovered that there was a thin layer of sweat there.

The pastel-coloured, thin inner robes he was still barely wearing were sticking to his skin. The curve of his back and waist became visible.

Jiang Yinghe turned his head and borrowed the weak candlelight to look at the other person. He saw the deep red blood orbs beneath Li Huanhan's eyelids as his disciple paused at the final item of clothing. He spoke in a hoarse voice after a moment. "Are you nervous?"

"...En."

"I don't understand what's going on with you. I can't say you're timid because you outright kidnapped me, but you're also not brazen—you seek permission before even kissing me." Jiang Yinghe's head was abuzz at the touch of those fingers against one of the most intimate parts of his body. He had no idea what he was saying himself, let alone expecting an answer, "You refuse to let me think of others, but the one you're hurting is yourself."

He lifted a hand to rub between his brows and circulate energy through his meridians to temporarily clear his mind. He couldn't help but add on, "What if I never accept you? When will you give up?"

The other party replied after a profound silence. "I will always stay by Shizun's side."

Jiang Yinghe just managed to relax against his disciple's intimate touch before he felt like Li Huanhan's technique was lackluster. Why was he putting on the shackle like he was threading a damn embroidery needle? He wasn't a needle right?... The stars that he suppressed from before popped out again at the stroke and glide against sensitive flesh. He muttered, "Your words sound familiar..." Hiss. "Be more gentle."

There was a tremor in his voice. He took a deep breath before closing his eyes and burying his head into the blankets while Huanhan continued to handle him with ambiguous gentleness. He tried to ignore the physical sensations by focussing on his disciple's words.

...Where had he heard them before? He felt like Qin Jun and Chang Ye had said something similar in the past.

After Li Huanhan finally put on the remaining restriction and returned his inner clothes to some semblance of decency, Jiang Yinghe's eyes were completely red-rimmed. There was sweat on his forehead. His lips had been bitten to the point of irritation. The two bunny ears on his head were slightly curled up in his hair.

He reclaimed the rest of his clothing and sat at the edge of the bed as he fastened his snow-white cloak and belt. He suddenly felt Li Huanhan approach.

Jiang Yinghe stilled. He didn't bother to look up as he spat out with red-rimmed eyes, "Pervert."

"En."

Li Huanhan actually admitted it calmly. He encircled Shizun's waist and helped him smooth out the wrinkles in his robe. His movements were well rehearsed. If this compassionate and dedicated eldest disciple didn't just do something as outrageous as that, it was impossible to tell the difference from the him in the past.

Although Jiang Yinghe has a lot of pent-up anger, he couldn't find it in him to be angry now. He saw how Li Huanhan gathered and fastened the strands of his hair that had come loose. He seemed as courteous as ever.

...Why couldn't he get angry?

Jiang Yinghe's traitorous body didn't avoid his disciple's hands, and he was somewhat weirded out. He slowly calmed down while tidying himself. It was quite some time before he asked the question at the very top of his mind. "Only the Xuehe Demon Lord from a thousand years ago could become a Half-step Golden Immortal with the Heavenly Demon Physique. What were your intentions for coming to Peng Lai's disciple selection?

Li Huanhan looked at him and stated evenly, "A vessel prepared beforehand with the Heavenly Demon Physique is a requirement for returning to life. When I woke up and triggered my bloodline, I was already a Peng Lai disciple."

Jiang Yinghe sighed and continued pressing the issue. "Then why didn't you refuse me as a master?"

His voice was always distant, but it seemed to reflect his depressed state at this moment. The candlelight shone on them from the side, softening the contrast between his long, inky hair and his robes.

His sleeves were embroidered with white plums and lined with gold thread. It was double sided with three different pictures sewn onto the rich fabric. There was silver thread on the other side.

Li Huanhan was quiet. His eyes landed on Jiang Yinghe's face.

"I wanted," he paused, "...to see how you would treat me."

Jiang Yinghe suddenly remembered he'd read a record written about the Xuehe Demon Lord. He'd suddenly risen to power a thousand years ago and personally ended his predecessor with his blade.

It was said that his father was originally a disciple of a righteous sect named Li Yunxiao. He was the most promising amongst Peng Lai's sword cultivators at the time. Li Yunxiao had eloped one night with the Tian Mo School Saintess Ning Fengyao. Both of them betrayed their sects in exchange for roaming the Earth and leading a peaceful life. But then...

The sects could not let this offence go unpunished. The records grew muddled as to what actually happened at this point. Some said that some betrayal of Ning Fengyao's caused Li Yunxiao to cut out his own heart. Others said that his soul was irreparably shattered after taking a blow meant for his wife from the Sect Master at the time...But the end result was the same. He died.

Ning Fengyao fled back to the Tian Mo School and made a deal with the Archbishop. She became the only Saintess to be made into a human puppet, and her son Li Huanhan became a disciple of that Archbishop.

The events that occurred afterwards...their descriptions were so dark and bloody that it was best to leave them unsaid.

Now, when Jiang Yinghe peered at the person in front of him, he felt that although he put on a stable facade, Li Huanhan was already as fragile as a cracked mirror on the inside.

He gazed straight into that pair of blood-red eyes.

"Shizun." Li Huanhan said, "Do you...already have someone special in your mind?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback, "Someone important to me in that way? You, you think so highly of me." Disappointment coated his voice.

Was he the only one actually purely focussed on teaching?

After a moment of reflection, he corrected himself with more certainty: "Not now, but maybe later on..."

He only got half way through before a chill ran down his spine. He realized that this didn't sound quite right either. When he wanted to restate what he meant, the solemn voice of his eldest disciple rang out.

"Shizun's body reacted that night on Qing Jing Peak." Li Huanhan remained cool as he said these words, "Were you thinking of Chang Ye when you climaxed?"

He was too calm while asking something like this. Jiang Yinghe's mind went blank.

...This was the reason he locked that up? No, before that. Isn't this guy too good at filling in holes in his head? He didn't have time to think about Chang Ye that night. First he was startled awake from being surrounded by so many men, then he couldn't get back to sleep for half the night. In his dreams...

Jiang Yinghe froze. He remembered the cool, slender fingers that touched him that night.

—It was all over.

That wasn't a dream, that was...

Jiang Yinghe reached up to adjust his collar as the other person continued to speak.

"Shizun called out for Chang Ye that night."

The details were fuzzy. He only recalled that Ye-er did visit for a long time before nightfall. While he was half-asleep, he did feel like someone touched his lips. He thought it was Ye-er who climbed onto his bed to make mischief.

Li Huanhan saw that he didn't reply, so he stopped expecting answers. He leaned in close to hold Jiang Yinghe tightly to his chest. He closed his eyes for a moment of silence before suddenly speaking, "Chang Ye was the one who put these things on you, right?"

Before Jiang Yinghe could react, a hand brushed over the rabbit ears on his head.

They had tried their best to conceal their presence, but the rabbit ears couldn't escape the fate of being caressed. The drooping ears were covered in pristine and snow white fur. There were tufts of hair at the ends.

Li Huanhan repeatedly fondled the soft things with his deceptively strong fingers.

Shizun suddenly stiffened in his lap. The fingers clasping his arm also trembled.

Jiang Yinghe's palms were sweaty, and it was difficult to even hold onto the fabric covering his disciple's arm. He recalled with frustration how his efforts to dispel the side effects of that damn drug were rendered null at the very last moment...he was uncomfortably sensitive, especially his ears.

He should've remembered this earlier. When Li Huanhan touched him intimately before, he had almost fainted from the overstimulation.

Jiang Yinghe's hand slid down a distance on the other man's arm before struggling to maintain its position. He lowered his head as he panted erratically, "Traitorous wretch."

The words were not intimidating at all. Even the tone in which they were delivered was soft. Jiang Yinghe was slumped over in Huanhan's lap with his head against his shoulder. He was rubbed to the point of questioning his life. Finally, he hugged his disciple around his waist and pleaded with shivering ears, "Don't, don't touch me anymore...Huanhan."

He still looked so normal, so why did Huanhan's personality suddenly devolve into this?! Before, Li Huanhan would only lightly ask for his permission even if he wanted to touch.

But now...their positions seem to have been reversed and the wicked disciple took constant liberties.

Jiang Yinghe's eyes were already red, but he couldn't shove him away. He could only slowly curl up in his lap as his furry ears heated up. He was so embarrassed that he was going to tie himself up into knots.

The other person seemed to return to his previous self for a moment. He lowered his head to beside Jiang Yinghe's ear.

"Your tail," Li Huanhan asked quietly, "can I touch it?"

Jiang Yinghe shivered. "!!!"

He immediately raised his eyes to stare with panic at him. He adamantly refused, "No way. You..."

Jiang Yinghe's voice cut out. The tips of his ears were suddenly massaged. He felt a whimper crawl up his throat.

...What crimes did I commit in my past life for you guys...to treat me like I owe you something deeper than simply being a mentor...

His refusal went unacknowledged and he felt Huanhan's hand slide under his robe. Jiang Yinghe struggled out of his lap and scrambled to a corner of the spacious bed. He hugged his knees to minimize that space he occupied.

He wiped the tears that came naturally to his eyes that were still read at the corners. He softened his voice and slowly said, "Huanhan...listen to me, alright?"

—-

Peng Lai Sect

In the Peng Lai main palace, countless disciples stood to the sides quietly waiting to receive their orders.

There was a meeting room in the back, beyond a screen partition floating in midair. Zhou Zhengping was seated in the foremost place with the purple-clad Yan Caiwei at his side.

Yun Buxiu was absent. To be more specific, there has been no news from Yun Buxiu ever since he accompanied Jiang Yinghe to attend the wake at Lan Ruo Temple. If it wasn't for the fact that his soul lamp and life card were undamaged, the two people present would have one more matter to be concerned with.

Below them, Chou Yonghe who was in soft green robes performed the salutations before continuing, "...Xuan Wei Xianjun remained behind to endure the humiliation of that evil cultivator for our sake. Now that the Spirit Patriarch has deployed the vast numbers of ghouls under his command to search for him, many ordinary spirits with low cultivation and intelligence have also escaped from the Nether Realm. It will be difficult to return them to the cycle of reincarnation. I'm afraid if this trend continues..."

He paused, but the implication was clear.

Zhou Zhengping flicked his whisk so that the tail rested on his arm. He attentively said, "My Shidi has always taken the greater picture into consideration, which is why he decided to help those of you from Yao Wang Valley. Although his current location is unknown, he was able to successfully escape from the clutches of evil. As for the matter of Qin Jun...further discussion with my peers is necessary.

Yan Caiwei sighed from the side. "Qing Yin Zheren has also not returned yet. If Peng Lai cannot even manage itself, how will we be able to guide the countless civilians out there? Has Zhenren caught sight of the disheveled and weary Peng Lai disciples on the way here? They're working themselves to the bone to protect those who cannot do so themselves."

Zhou Yonghe thought that neither of them had it easy. He could only sigh in commiseration.

Who could have predicted that one of the geniuses listed on the Hundred Year Ranking was a wraith who was born to lead all ghost cultivators?

The three remained silent. Suddenly, a message talisman folded into the shape of a bird flew in from the outer palace. It swerved around the

partition to alight itself in Zhou Zhengping's palm.

He paused before sending a current of spiritual energy over to release the contents. He suspected that this message talisman was of Devilish origins. A layer of beast-like marking lit up as the energy flowed through it.

Yet it was Xiao Yun-shidi's voice that came from within.

"Zhangmen-shixiong..." He greeted. Then without further preamble said, "Chang Ye is a Devil."

Zhou Zhengping was taken aback. He hurried to ask, "What did you say?"

The talisman contained only a recording and could not relay his words.

There was a rustling noise. Then came the unfamiliar, rumbling voice of another man.

"Xiao Yun-shishu?" For some reason he referred to Yun Buxiu this way. His distance from the talisman could not be determined, "Who are you talking with?"

"No one...take your tail off me." Yun Buxiu said, "I just want to organize my thoughts...Didn't you say that my Shizhi was your venerated ancestor or something?"

The man laughed. "Of course. I never imagined that the Devil King Tianhou could come back to life. His Majesty was the one who sealed the Devil God into the Endless Abyss. He is definitely worthy of his title. Although I had thought he would be tall and muscular like my brother. But he's..."

"But he's so good-looking?" Yun Buxiu finished off his sentence.

Then for some reason Yun Buxiu let out a soft groan, "Okay, change back already. You're way too heavy...Why did my Shizhi order you to watch over me?"

A tiger quietly roared from very close by. The accompanying words were almost incomprehensible.

"...He wants to pursue your Shixiong."

The conversation cut off here.

Zhou Zhengping's eyes met with Yan Caiwei's. They remained like that for a while.

Yan Caiwei spoke first. Her voice was trembling with shock, "Chang Ye...is the Demon King? So Jiang-shidi has been captured by him right now?"

Zhou Zhengping said, "Then Xiao Yun-shidi is...with a tiger devil?!"

The two exchanged glances once again before drinking some tea to soothe their nerves. Yan Caiwei collected herself after a moment and spoke to Chou Yonghe, "Zhenren, you should head back to inform Yao Wang Valley. This time, I'm afraid that Peng Lai will struggle to even protect itself."

Author's Corner

The inspiration for that part in the middle about using the stars in the night sky as a metaphor came from Mr. Lao She's novel 'Rickshaw Boy'. Today's HeHe is so soft, can I rub him too?

Rain

While everyone else is panicking, Shizun is fooling around with Li Huanhan...

Sahl

I was shook when our lovely readers mentioned a specific type of thing in Huanhan's hand. I was further shooketh when it turns out our smart little bunnies were right!

Rain! I thought of our readers as lovely Gusu rabbits, so innocent and sweet...

Tugs at Rain's sleeve Rain! They aren't so innocent at all!

Doesn't sound like Yun Buxiu is having as tough a time of it as we thought... 😏

OceanofPDF.com

CH40 - NOT STRAIGHT ANYMORE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Li Huanhan's state became more and more unstable.

His body was often surrounded by the stale smell of blood, and his inner energies were often in disarray. At the beginning Jiang Yinghe thought that this was due to his internal demons, but he later realized...it was more like he was injured.

The people responsible were obvious. It must have been one of his other disciples. Jiang Yinghe was currently the vanguard of the righteous faction as the number one sword cultivator of the immortal way, so of course he was very familiar with the combat abilities of each of the major sects.

His disciples...were fighting?

Jiang Yinghe meditated on this thought momentarily. He was brought back to attention by a familiar voice from beside his ear.

"Shizun." Li Huanhan called softly, "Who are you forsaking sleep to think about?"

He understood Jiang Yinghe all too well. He could estimate when he would be tired and when he would wake.

The soft and fuzzy rabbit ears on top Jiang Yinghe's head curled up like he didn't want to hear his voice. But soon enough he asked quietly, "Who did you fight with?"

Li Huanhan was curled protectively around his Shizun like he always was. He only lifted his head after hearing the question. There was a trace of gentle humour in his eyes. "So you were thinking of this."

He paused before casually remarking, "Shizun needn't worry. I won't die."

One of his hands was tightly wrapped around Jiang Yinghe's waist. He was buried in Li Huanhan's shoulder. Their breaths intertwined once again.

Li Huanhan liked to sleep while hugging him way too much. If he didn't do something like locking him up in a little dark room, Jiang Yinghe would be hard pressed to find where he was different from before—

If he really had to give an answer, it was that his disciple's possessiveness had taken root and gradually revealed itself.

Only when Li Huanhan was present could Jiang Yinghe sense the arrays and formations around these sleeping chambers. They cut off almost all paths to get to this location. When Li Huanhan, the one who arranged it all, left, Jiang Yinghe couldn't even feel their existence anymore.

It has been a long time since he has been inferior in terms of cultivation.

Jiang Yinghe cast down his eyes and said cooly, "Whether you are alive or dead does not concern me."

As long as his sensitive rabbit ears were not being rubbed, Jiang Yinghe could still maintain his peerlessly cold attitude. He was already a bit angry, so his words carried a faint hint of frustration.

To sum it up using a saying on Earth, this was a cold war.

Li Huanhan stopped breathing for a split second. He didn't say anything. He just leaned forward and bit into Jiang Yinghe's slender and white throat.

"Ah!..." Jiang Yinghe struggled to take a breath. His fingers dove into his inky black hair to rub his temples. He frowned, "Are you done? I'm tired. Don't bother me anymore."

He had picked up that his words only had an effect on Li Huanhan if they were spoken courteously.

As expected, his eldest disciple retracted his lips but continued to hug him contentedly.

...What kind of animal was his astrology sign? Why did he have to stroke him in the direction of his fur?

Jiang Yinghe was already used to him not talking much. Now he spoke even less. It wasn't like Li Huanhan started doing this a few days ago. And as long as he didn't want to touch his ears, they could still negotiate.

He tried to remove his extra pair of ears earlier, but Chang Ye must've done something because he couldn't remove it himself. There was no way that Li Huanhan would help him with this.

It was like adding salt onto the injury of his questionable student's history and his teaching methods.

Jiang Yinghe really was tired. He had to sleep where Li Huanhan could see him before the other person would rest. Sometimes he didn't, despite this. He's seen times where Li Huanhan hugged him and stared at him the entire night...

So tonight's plan was up to fate.

Pretending to sleep wouldn't work. Jiang Yinghe could only forcefully wake himself up after going to sleep without startling the other person.

The candle was bright.

In the silence, Jiang Yinghe maintained his even breathing as he woke up in the middle of the night. He opened his eyes a crack. There was no movement from the other person.

...Great, he was asleep. It looked like fate was smiling down on him right now.

Jiang Yinghe's body didn't move. Only his finger touched the storage artifact on his hand—Li Huanhan had never searched his body. He didn't know if it was out of carelessness, indifference, or a genuine fear of making him more upset.

His finger brushed past the artifact once to retrieve the messenger plate he bought from the deer devil shopkeeper.

He originally intended to use it to ask Peng Lai for more information about Qin Jun's current movements, but who would've thought that it would be used under these circumstances instead? Even the best plans were prone to failure.

It was a good thing that although the arrays prevented anything from coming in, the same could not be said for going out.

He slowly eased his consciousness into the tablet. He soon received a response. Jiang Yinghe sighed in relief and quickly focused and dived into the tablet.

"Don't speak."

The other party immediately quieted. They seemed to have noticed his surroundings.

The transmission of sound was slightly faster. Besides, communicating using your consciousness was like someone used to typing using autocorrect having to write things by hand. Not only was it slow, but it required patience.

"Shixiong, I'm at a place that you can't find right now. Don't worry about me, I have a plan. Is Peng Lai still safe?"

It was quite some time before Jiang Yinghe could feel the narrow symbols rising on the transmissions tablet.

"Peng Lai is fine. Where are you? The ghost cultivators have allied themselves with the devil race to fight against the Tian Mo School. The

cultivation world is in a panic. Peng Lai has done its best to take in as many displaced cultivators as possible. Before, when I asked the Devil King, he said that you were not with him. Where are you?"

Devil King? Jiang Yinghe suddenly had a premonition. He asked.

"Is Chang Ye the Devil King?"

"Yes."

Jiang Yinghe couldn't speak for a moment. As he thought, those who could be referred to with respect were all highly skilled cultivators no matter their race. He might be another Half-step Golden Immortal. If Jiang Yinghe didn't know that he transmigrated over and that the heavens were emotionless to begin with, he might have believed that the heavens held a grudge against him.

He suppressed his feelings and continued to with his message.

"Don't worry about me. However, there is a string of demonic runes that I will have to trouble Shixiong to look into."

He sent over the runes that he had observed on his shackles the past few days.

"...Demonic runes? Their purpose seems to be restraining... This seems to be a very famous type."

Very famous...?

Jiang Yinghe paused. He felt Zhangmen-shixiong's confusion bleed through in his next message.

"This type of restraining rune is the only one that is harmless to the one it is used on. It was very popular a thousand years ago, but hardly any demonic cultivators used it...Ahem. It was mainly used by those from He Huan sect or amongst cultivation partners while they...had some fun in the bedroom."

The last four words shocked Jiang Yinghe into questioning his life. He unconsciously glanced down at Li Huanhan before continuing to ask.

"How is it broken then?"

"I'll send you the method to break it."

Jiang Yinghe focused and flawlessly recorded the method that Zhou Zhengping sent over into his mind. Just as he was about to ask about the details, he felt a familiar gaze land on him.

!!!

He ended the transmission and very quickly returned the transmissions tablet to his personal dimension. He heard Li Huanhan's gravelly voice.

"Shizun." His breath came closer. A hot sensation brushed past his eyelashes. "You're awake."

...He knew it. He couldn't fool his eldest disciple unless he was actually sleeping. Jiang Yinghe's eyelashes fluttered as he opened his eyes to look at him. Before he could say a word, the other person crushed him beneath his body.

A slightly cool hand lightly grasped his jaw. Li Huanhan leaned down to ask quietly, "How long were you awake?"

He could even tell that kind of thing... Jiang Yinghe furrowed his brow and ducked to avoid Huanhan's hand. He said coldly, "Since when do I report to you?"

Li Huanhan was silent for a moment. "I sensed a fluctuation of spiritual energy just now. Shizun, what were you doing?"

Jiang Yinghe had to give props to how sensitive he was. He could even pick up the act of returning the transmissions tablet to the spacial artifact after just waking up. But the item was already safely inside. He pretended nothing was wrong and buried himself in the blankets to go back to sleep.

A rustling sound came from beside him. Li Huanhan seemed to find something in his search. His voice was strange as he asked, "Shizun...did you get this because you were afraid of being hurt?"

Jiang Yinghe startled. He didn't know what the other had found. He turned to see the little porcelain jar in between Li Huanhan's fingers. There was a very lifelike illustration of a little chrysanthemum on it.

...Wasn't this the freebie that the deer devil merchant threw in when he bought the transmissions tablets? He carelessly threw it into this personal dimension. Who would've thought that he would accidentally take it out as well earlier?

The atmosphere became awkward. Jiang Yinghe's heart was muddled.

Li Huanhan was the first to break the silence. He opened the small jar to see the silky lubricant within.

Jiang Yinghe had chills running down his spine as he heard the other person's next words.

"You want it?"

No. There's been a huge misunderstanding. That train driver of a deer devil gave it to him. Jiang Yinghe couldn't even push a cart.

Jiang Yinghe sat up helplessly and scooted over to a corner as he explained, "No, I just...couldn't sleep at night, so I took it out to...play with it?"

Li Huanhan raised an eyebrow. "Play with it?"

Damn, he was making things worse for himself.

"Then why avoid me?" Li Huanhan came over to kiss him. He only gently brushed his lips over Jiang Yinghe's forehead when he saw the other person wasn't too against it. His voice became throaty. "This disciple can help."

"No need." Jiang Yinghe shifted back some more. He tyrannically closed off his face. "I don't like you, so of course I would avoid you."

Li Huanhan's whole body stiffened. His breathing became erratic, as if those words stabbed into his flesh like knives. He was so tense that he only breathed out a few moments later. His voice was impassive. "Then why isn't Shizun playing anymore?"

...What was that supposed to mean?

"This disciple wants to watch Shizun play with himself." Li Huanhan said, "Think of me and play with yourself, alright?"

Jiang Yinghe's brain stopped functioning. He couldn't resist filling in the blanks of this suddenly heated situation. It was like a cloud vessel flew past him just now. The person in front of him clearly didn't believe anything was wrong with his request... More importantly, neither did he.

Fuck he wasn't straight anymore.

He didn't know whether to first salvage his orientation that was as curved as an embroidery hoop or deal with his expectant audience of one...

Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath. "I don't want to show you Li Huanhan. Control yourself."

That pair of blood-red eyes bore into him. It was hard to guess how he was feeling. About two or three breaths later, Li Huanhan suddenly spoke, "If Shizun has a reaction while thinking about me, then this disciple will loosen the ring."

Jiang Yinghe was rendered speechless. He was tempted, but he refused for the sake of his pride in the end. "...Although the condition is moving, I have always been devoid of such thoughts. But it really doesn't hinder..."

"It does."

Jiang Yinghe: "...What?"

The other person declined to clarify. He raised a hand to encircle the soft rabbit ears in his air.

Jiang Yinghe jolted. His eyes were glued to the other's hand. He watched as the hand that had personally put the ring on turned to touch his tail. He stepped on Li Huanhan's wrist and sighed deeply. His voice was shaking as he issued a reprimand, "...Li Huanhan, you bastard. Can't you behave like a human for once?"

His restraints rattled.

Jiang Yinghe's face was forced to touch his. The other party was very possessive, but he was overly cautious when touching his lips.

He heard Li Huanhan's voice from beside his ear. It was close enough to make his entire body heat up.

"Shizun, I'll loosen the ring for you." He said quietly, "Let me help you solve this problem, alright?"

Only the Heavens knew which problem he was talking about.

Jiang Yinghe knew that this person could only be stroked towards the grain. He softly sighed and leaned against Li Huanhan's shoulder. His voice was light.

"No more playing around. I really am tired. Be obedient and don't bother me anymore."

His ability to soothe others was so lacklustre. It was a disgrace to his entire career as an educator.

It was quite some time before he barely managed to catch Li Huanhan's response.

"...Alright," he said, "I'll listen to Shizun."

—-

The next morning.

When Jiang Yinghe woke up, Li Huanhan had already left.

His cultivation was like ice, and he had long since been able to abstain from food. Eating was only a preference, and he often expelled waste products from his body by circulating his spiritual energy. Normally speaking, as long as his pride as a human was left alone, adding something really didn't affect his life.

There were no guards here. It was just him and the bubbling Blood Pond nearby. He used the method that Zhangmen-shixiong had sent over to remove the shackles on his limbs. He studied the little silver ring for a while, but he was unable to take it off.

He'll just have to live with it for now.

Jiang Yinghe readjusted his clothing and carefully made his way out of the sleeping chambers. It was only when he was at the edge of the arrays that he could feel their presence without Li Huanhan beside him.

He took a deep breath and reviewed everything he knew about arrays. This, along with pointers from Zhangmen-shixiong, and the entirety of Peng Lai's collection of scrolls, was enough for him to safely dismantle the barrier that isolated him from the outside.

Finally, after many days, Jiang Yinghe saw the situation outside. He wanted to take a deep breath to savour the scent of freedom he had been denied for so long, but then he noticed the scenery before him. One half was a blood-soaked hell, the other was a vast mountain range in the human realm.

He paused and jerked his head back. The place he had stepped out of was gone. It was just a normal crossing inside of an ancient mountain forest.

This was similar to the methods used to secure Peng Lai sect's entrance, but...

It seems like...this was the border between the lands of the ghosts and the humans. If he headed left, he would enter the Nether Realm. You know what they say, walk in the darkness and hide where they least expect it.

Jiang Yinghe used to think that there was no way he would voluntarily enter the Nether Realm, but he had a feeling that his other two disciples were keeping a close eye on Peng Lai. He had to act calmly and think in the long term.

Jiang Yinghe hesitated between the two places for a while. He gained some inspiration from Li Huanhan's ideology of 'walking in the dark'. The border of the Nether Realm was mostly occupied by low-level ghosts. As long as there was enough of a difference between their cultivation levels, an illusion was enough to safeguard his identity as a living person from them... Even if he was exposed, they would probably mistake him for a devil.

A twofold disguise. It didn't sound too bad.

He would decide his next steps after gathering some intel in the Nether Realm. Jiang Yinghe ran his hand over his outer garment, warping the original snow white cloak into a tattered red shirt radiating miasma. He was about to cross over to the Nether Realm when he remembered something.

He took out another artifact meant to obscure his features and conceal his breath from his spatial ring. The mask of a furious wraith gritting its teeth settled over his face.

Author's Corner

HeHe: I'm really a genius!

OceanofPDF.com

CH41 - LACKING A PASSION ROOT (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

In the Nether Realm, there were many spirits on the path to reincarnation.

They often drifted in and out of consciousness, relying on invisible connections to lead them into the River Styx. There, the turning of the heavens would cleanse them of their sins, producing new souls with clean slates.

Only the souls that received another person's protection could get the chance to reincarnate from here with their previous memories sealed.

Those that had reached enlightenment, those that still had lingering convictions, and those that were aware of their death were the most lucid of the ghost cultivators. They were often cultivators in their past life that had accumulated enough grudges and regrets to become vengeful ghosts.

Jiang Yinghe found a small tea shop that was a gathering place for said ghosts.

There was never any daylight in the Nether Realm. The sky was always the same dim, light green colour. Mindless spirits could be seen everywhere, and the ghost cultivators who had a strong presence often had twisted and frightening expressions.

The owner of the little tea shop was a female Raksha. She was the most beautiful person that Jiang Yinghe had seen on his way here. But since he had spent too much time with Chang Ye, he has become very resistant to

beauty from either gender. He took a single casual glance and no more than that.

The tea was steeped with water from the River Styx. There were gems radiating miasma resting within the cup.

Jiang Yinghe had never seen such a variety before. After a tense moment of arguing with himself, he forced himself to drink some. As he poured another cup to hold in his hands, the strange-looking little ghost across from him struck up a conversation.

"A devil huh?" The little ghost poked at the back of his hands, "How'd you die?"

Jiang Yinghe quieted for a moment before shooting him a look. He lightly said, "...My disciples angered me to death."

There were many ghosts in the tea shop, and all sorts of conversations as well. Jiang Yinghe's voice wasn't very loud. It was just enough for the little ghost that had shuffled closer to hear.

The little ghost had a head of green hair that was like a mess of seaweed. He rested his chin in his palm as his eyes, that were as big as bronze bells, lit up. "Wow what a coincidence. You're a devil that had disciples. Have you seen the latest issue of the 'Nether World Times'?"

Naturally, Jiang Yinghe concealed his confusion. He replied, "Of course."

The green-haired ghost smacked his lips and started to gossip. "Our Patriarch...sigh. You're already dead and you can't be purified, so you're one of us now. Our Patriarch is going nuts. He's sent all eighteen lower layers of vengeful ghosts out to look for someone. Don't you think the humans would be scared to death?"

Jiang Yinghe had heard something similar from Zhangmen-shixiong, but he didn't understand at the time. The ghost in the tea shop filled in some blanks. "The Patriarch forbade them from harming the humans."

Jiang Yinghe comforted himself. It seems that Qin Jun still had some restraint...clearly his teachings weren't all for naught—from a certain perspective.

"Heh. Those ghosts aren't right in the head. Orders are orders, but anything goes when they throw a fit." The green-haired ghost poured a cup of river water. "The Patriarch had a bout with the Xuehe Demon Lord and severed the River Styx. Its flow has been disrupted for quite some time. If the Patriarch doesn't fix it soon, not only the Nether Realm, but also the entire cultivation world's going to have problems... Guess who came a few days ago?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't play along. He asked, "The flow of the River Styx has been disrupted? Then the Human Realm..."

"They're running on immortal fumes there. If the Patriarch doesn't fix things soon, I'm guessing that the children born there will either be not right in the head from only having half a soul or just stillborn to begin with."

The green-haired ghost chattered on and on, like the dead devil in front of him didn't know a thing. He spared no details as he asked the proprietor for another pot of tea.

"Add more cremated ashes and three spoonfuls of ignorant hatred." The ghost rattled off his usual order. He saw that the little devil before him was wearing a mask, so he reached forward to paw at it, "Come on, no matter how ugly you look, there's bound to be someone uglier here."

Jiang Yinghe caught his hand and pressed it onto the table. He continued to question him, "I just heard that recently...many devils have entered the Nether Realm?"

"Who told you that?" the little ghost frowned. "Other than their king, the other devils don't dare to cause a ruckus here... The only reason our Patriarch hasn't retaliated is because they were once disciple brothers."

He seemed to be very interested in this topic. "Did you hear? The Patriarch, the Demon Lord and the Devil King all studied under the same Xianjun

after reincarnating. That Xianjun's the reason for the recent upset as well!"

Jiang Yinghe, the one responsible, had a complicated expression as he looked at the deeply curious face of the little ghost. He coughed and replied neutrally, "That's quite an accomplishment."

"Right?" the green-haired devil tilted his head in thought as he spoke, "It looks more like they're fighting over a cultivation partner rather than a furnace though..."

Before he finished speaking, the entire tea shop became dead silent in the twinkling of an eye. Jiang Yinghe followed the gazes of the ghost cultivators skyward. An emerald light flashed there as an ear-piercing roar echoed throughout the entirety of the Nether Realm.

Jiang Yinghe was still recovering when he heard the little ghost beside him speak in an awed tone, "Your king came again so soon ah. He's been visiting so often. That's one hell of a grudge he's holding against that heavenly demon."

Chang Ye? Chang Ye came to find Qin Jun?

Jiang Yinghe gathered himself and sat up straighter. "What do you mean?"

"You don't know?" The green-haired little ghost looked at him, astonished. "We've been allied for quite some time ah. Since these two Half-step Golden Immortals have joined forces, that heavenly demon could only wait to get hit."

No wonder Li Huanhan's state has deteriorated recently. Their alliance has increased their strength not just additively, but exponentially.

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly. He was still thinking about the impact of the broken River Styx on the various realms. He paused before tentatively asking, "What do you think would happen...to that person when the Patriarch finds him?"

"They'll get married, of course." The little ghost said matter-of-factly, "But I kind of don't want him to find that person."

His words had merit. The current triangle formation was the most stable. If one side gained an advantage, the other two would work together to beat them back down.

Jiang Yinghe touched his mask absentmindedly. These three were deploying military tactics like flanking their enemies and attacking on multiple fronts...but he's never taught them this stuff? They just had to all be bigshots as well. Take Qin Jun for example. He was the only one in the world who could reconnect the River Styx.

But Jun-er probably has other things weighing on his mind right now.

Jiang Yinghe didn't notice how he slipped into old habits just now and used the nickname he had swore off.

The conversations of the ghost cultivators were loud and messy. Jiang Yinghe thought for a bit before asking, "Then how should the issue of the river be solved? You can't be suggesting that those three share the Xianjun, right?"

His voice was too quiet. The green-haired ghost didn't catch his words. He came closer and asked, "What did you say?"

Jiang Yinghe repeated himself. The little devil let out a smile that could almost be described as warm. "Kill that guy and let his soul return to nature. Then the leaders can find a substitute. Just think about what our Patriarch can do with his paper person technique...tut tut tut. Golden Immortals have their own ways of amusing themselves."

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...That method is way too cruel."

His back went cold while listening to that. Even his hands that were thumbing the teacup had stopped.

The green-haired little ghost didn't elaborate further. He carefully sniffed around the other person. His head seemed to be filled with question marks. "Little devil, were you a really kind person in life? Why do you smell so nice?"

Was this the soul of a god? It was only after getting closer that he smelled that divine scent. The green-haired ghost was already feeling dizzy after just two whiffs. He clung onto his hand and moved his way.

Jiang Yinghe took his hand away and adjusted his collar. He hurried to say, "I'll be going first. Let's talk another day."

He was wearing a tattered red shirt that was altered by an artifact to make him appear more like a vengeful ghost. The cloth was stained all over to various degrees with droplets of blood. Some had already congealed while others were still wet. The torn parts revealed his flawlessly white skin and the sculpted edge of his collarbone.

There was a rip originating from his back. Without the cover of his usual daoist robes, the narrow side profile of his waist was revealed. Even through sight alone, it was apparent how light Jiang Yinghe was, as if a single arm could encircle his waist.

The green-haired ghost only realized how attractive this little devil appeared from watching his departing back. He wiped the saliva leaking from his mouth. He was about to call out to Jiang Yinghe when the dark sky rumbled deafeningly once again.

The ghost cultivators all startled. They looked to the sky to see the originally dark clouds being ripped apart by vividly red lines. Li Huanhan's voice pierced through the clouds and assaulted their senses.

"Qin Jun—"

His voice was devoid of his usual warmth. There was only an endless cold contained within.

"Get out here."

In the next moment, the once quiet Nether Realm began to tremble. The River Styx urgently reversed its flow. Far away, Qin Jun and Chang Ye shifted into existence in midair. The vivid and blood-like light retreated. Li Huanhan stood before the two of them with chilling eyes.

This was the first time the three had not started fighting after their identities were exposed.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to leave, but this scene made him stiffen. He was hesitant to walk away. He turned to see that all the ghost cultivators in the tea shop were as quiet as crickets in winter as they saluted in Qin Jun's direction.

"You still have the face to come out." Qin Jun's gray eyes were icy. He opened his hand to accept the silvery-gray sword that appeared from his personal dimension. "Li Huanhan. You sure have a lot of Blood Ponds to revive you."

In the past while, he's broken no less than ten of those things. Chang Ye helped him destroy an equal amount. But Li Huanhan was just too hard to kill. This heavenly demon set down Blood Ponds everywhere. It would probably take something on the level of heavenly lightning to completely end him.

Chang Ye stood by his side in the air. His lips still had a trace of mirth, but his eyes were freezing. They were filled with an impatient rage as they glanced at Li Huanhan.

"Shizun left." Li Huanhan got to the point, "I can sense his presence not far from here. I've searched through the Human Realm. This is the only place left.

Qin Jun glared at him momentarily. His words were violent and irritated, "What? You lost the person you were hiding?"

Li Huanhan looked back with a blank face. "En."

Qin Jun hated his stoic and indifferent attitude the most. He also couldn't stand the way this heavenly demon pretended to be kind in front of Shizun. His fingers tightened. The edge of his sword began to ring. It thirsted for blood.

Just as Zhanyun prepared to strike, an emerald green flute tapped against it. Chang Ye's voice came from the side.

"Let's find Shizun first." He paused, "With our Li-shixiong's personality, he wouldn't lie to us like this, even if all the Blood Pools had been ruined and the Tian Muo School was decimated, right?"

Chang Ye smiled freely, but his eyes remained dark. "If Shizun is hurt in the slightest, I'll cremate all your sect members."

From what they knew of him, although Jiang Yinghe was slow when it came to emotions, he has been cultivating for a very long time. It was not really a surprise to anyone that he managed to escape from Li Huanhan's clutches. If Chang Ye hadn't preemptively taken Jiang Yinghe away from the Nether Realm, Qin Jun wouldn't have been able to keep him forever either.

The most important thing to consider was that many methods of restriction would harm the one they were used on. In Chang Ye's first face-to-face discussion with Qin Jun, they had considered the possibility that Shizun could escape if Li Huanhan hadn't gone completely insane... As long as a solution existed, Jiang Yinghe could figure it out at his level of cultivation. Whether they were curses, formations, dimensional arrays wasn't important.

It was just a matter of having the right tools and enough time. Overwhelming firepower was not always the best solution.

Qin Jun spoke up right after Chang Ye. His gaze swept over the vast section of the Nether Realm that bordered human territory. "What are you guys planning when we find him?"

Li Huanhan remained silent. Chang Ye rapped on his flute. "We'll sit down and have a civil conversation, of course."

"And what if we don't find him?"

Their little Chang Ye-shidi smiled again. His pure demeanour was dyed pitch black with fevered possessiveness. "We will."

Qin Jun sneered at him. "You really are two-faced."

Chang Ye laughed. "You're no different."

He turned to look at Li Huanhan. His tone became even more mocking, "While we're on this topic, I'm a mere amateur compared to a certain someone that could appear kind, restrained and harmless all while being consumed by internal demons. Right, Li-shixiong?"

Li Huanhan glared at him in return. "Your tail's puffed up."

—-

From the perspectives of the Nether Realm's ghost cultivators, the three leaders actually didn't fight after they met. That was miracle number one. Miracle number two was they actually had a decently civil conversation. Miracle number three—they headed into the Patriarch's palace together.

It was only after they had left and the pressure and weather returned to normal that the ghost cultivators resumed their noisy chatter.

"Did you see that? Did you see that?! What an unexpected turn of events! This is definitely going on tomorrow's issue of the 'Nether Realm Times'!" a nearby ghost cultivator slapped his own thigh out of excitement and shouted, "Landlady, another two pounds of white candles!"

The landlady responded and hurried off.

In the clamour around him, Jiang Yinghe uneasily pulled at his thin collar. Even a fool could see that Huanhan had come over to call for a temporary ceasefire with the other two bastards after searching everywhere.

Now that he was thinking about it, it was the same last time in Wanyao City. He was always able to find Jiang Yinghe...no matter what choice he made

or what obscure place he hid. It was like he put a tracking charm on him or something...

A thought quickly flew through Jiang Yinghe's mind at that. It was almost too quick to catch.

He stopped walking and unexpectedly recalled the sword pendant on Wangchen... It was gifted to him a long time ago by Li Huanhan. It has made contact with his injuries and soaked in the blood of two people.

As Jiang Yinghe pondered this, he was filled with unease and more importantly, a sense of disappointment. He sighed. Just when he was looking for a place to rest so he could take off the sword pendant, he was stopped by the enchanting and languid voice of a female.

He lifted his eyes and met the gaze of the tea shop owner. She asked, "You still have regrets after dying?"

Jiang Yinghe replied, "If I didn't have regrets, would I be barred from entering the River Styx and the cycle of reincarnation?"

The female proprietor felt his words made sense. She served one last pot of tea before lighting up her pipe in front of Jiang Yinghe. While smoking an unknown blend of grasses, she scooped into the very bottom of the wooden tea barrel. "I think your regrets are weighing heavily upon you. You barely drank any of your tea from before. Here, I'll get you something new."

She sent a flirtatious wink Jiang Yinghe's way, as if she was interested in him. Then she mixed together half a bowl of assorted emotions and several extra spoonfuls of love. Pouring the mixture into a teacup, she presented it to the little devil with a pleasing profile.

He might have been a devil in life, but now he could only be a ghost cultivator. The landlady thought this as she tapped her ladle.

Jiang Yinghe accepted the cup because it didn't feel right to refuse. He glanced at the rainbow coloured water that bubbled by itself.

But the landlady's stare was too obvious. He considered it for a moment before deciding to not forsake her goodwill. He lifted the cup to sample it.

For those that have cultivated long enough, their bodies were automatically able to break down these unnecessary materials. The waste products would then be expelled from the body when they circulated their spiritual energy. Jiang Yinghe wasn't worried about this affecting his cultivation, but the taste threw him for a loop.

It tasted like an overturned bottle of five spice powder... There were all kinds of flavours.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to hurl after just one mouthful. He rubbed at his chest and swallowed back his nausea, when he remembered that he was in the Nether Realm.

He raised his head and was about to ask the landlady about the most popular resting places for ghost cultivators when he saw the astonished look on her face.

The landlady was very beautiful, but her eyes were completely pitch black. She looked Jiang Yinghe up and down. After she didn't find any abnormalities, she asked, "You...why aren't you reacting?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He responded with a question, "How am I supposed to react?"

The landlady was even more surprised, "Happiness, anger, sadness, fear, love, wickedness, desire. I put all those in along with the five senses, and added a lot of additional love as well. You...are you completely numb?"

"Numb?"

The landlady's face was changing colours. She urgently said, "You're numb? Then tell me, what does this tea taste like? Is it sweet?"

Jiang Yinghe hesitated before telling the truth. "It's sour, sweet, bitter, spicy, salty, astringent and fresh. None of the flavours particularly stand out."

The landlady was stunned. She dully said, "Could it be that...you don't have a passion root?"

Author's Corner

The author's note was just an advertisement for another novel this time so it was omitted.

Rain

Our oblivious Shizun is finally about to find out!

Sahl

Jiang Yinghe: "My disciples angered me to death."

Demon Lord, Patriarch, Devil King: *sneeze* '...'

OceanofPDF.com

CH42 - A COURAGEOUS DEMAND (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The places ghost cultivators tended to gather were infested with strong resentful energy.

After Jiang Yinghe entered the ancient tomb, a ghost at this odd 'hotel' brought him to one of the catacombs. There was a large and solemn coffin in the middle.

How...avant-garde.

The way this hotel took payment was also strange. Ghost cultivators naturally had no use for the monetary items of humans, and they also didn't accept the spirit stones used in the cultivation world. The manager glanced at him like he wanted to take Jiang Yinghe's mask, but after a moment of hesitation, he only asked for a piece of red cloth from his sleeve.

Although his clothing was an artifact, he had many others just like it. Jiang Yinghe was surprised, but he immediately ripped off a piece to give to the manager.

He scanned his surroundings and concluded that he blended in passably with the crowd. Only then did he enter the catacombs and sit in the coffin provided.

As soon as he was seated, Jiang Yinghe reached out to summon Wangchen. His gaze rested on the cold jade mirror stone hanging from the sword. After a moment, he pulled the sword pendant off. He originally wanted to place it

in his spatial ring, but thought better of it. If this sword pendant really was able to track his location, then it could do so no matter where it was on his person.

Jiang Yinghe struggled for a long time before steeling his heart and using his spiritual energy to break apart this treasure, made from an ancient relic, piece by piece.

The internal structure of the mirror stone was fragile. When the frosty spiritual energy permeated throughout, it was like fire meeting ice. It broke apart quickly and soon lost all its spiritual presence.

Jiang Yinghe stared at the mirror stone for a while before lightly closing his eyes and breathing out. After he stored it in his personal dimension, he began to consider the words the landlady said to him.

"You can taste sweetness, so you aren't completely devoid of emotions. However, you are insensitive to excessive 'love'. Is it possible that your passion root has been removed?"

The landlady tapped her pipe as she said this.

"I heard that some cultivators who cultivate the heartless way choose to sever their emotions and abstain from love, but it's a dishonest practice. None of them are able to reach the higher stages of the heartless way. Your cultivation is quite high, even I can't see exactly how powerful you are. Yet you don't know for sure if you have a passion root?"

Jiang Yinghe couldn't recall anything about extracting his passion root, so he remained silent and listened.

The landlady sucked hard on her pipe. Her voice was languid, "If you lack your passion root, you won't be able to sense attraction from anyone nor perceive it in yourself. Even if you love someone, your feelings for them would stop on the cusp of romantic love...just like a piece of driftwood stuck on the shore."

"Wood..."

"How strange. You actually can't remember anything. The process to remove a passion root is quite painful, so how can you forget so easily? Fine, fine. Since you're such a beauty, the tea will be on me."

Jiang Yinghe unconsciously tried to touch his face, but all he felt was the grimacing mask. Just as he was questioning the standards of beauty of ghosts, the landlady at his side suddenly rubbed at her neck and sucked in a deep breath near him. It was like he was more addicting than her pipe. She smacked her mouth. "What a fragrant spiritual scent you have, beauty."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

As expected, ghost cultivators had a twisted idea of what was beautiful. No, not just them. Heavenly demons, devils, they all had strange ideas about beauty. The sword pendant on Wangchen was the ultimate proof that all his disciples had something wrong with their heads.

So that's the situation right now.

Jiang Yinghe left the coffin and poured himself a cup of tea from the pot on the small table. He stared at the blue concoction that was radiating miasma before helplessly putting it down.

His mind was a mess, what with thinking about his passion root, his current situation, the River Styx deviating its flow and affecting all life... Even if he had no intentions of being a saviour, he didn't want to see the world completely destroyed before his eyes.

If he really couldn't go home...

Jiang Yinghe spaced out for a second. Then he took out the transmission tablet to contact Zhangmen-shixiong and ask in a roundabout way about his 'missing passion root'. Before he could do so, he heard the incessant clamour from outside suddenly still. Then he heard the manager speak beseechingly, "Who could Darens be looking for at my humble establishment?"

The voices of two children, a boy and a girl, sounded at the same time, "An honoured guest."

"How can an honoured guest possibly reside in our shabby little place? Only stray ghosts without a grave to call their own stay here."

The girl said, "He is the Patriarch's..."

The boy finished her sentence, "Shizun."

Girl, "And he's also the Patriarch's..."

Boy, "Cultivation partner."

The two spoke in this strange way. It was like they were a single soul and mind split between two bodies. If they didn't speak in unison, they could only take turns like this.

The manager spoke up. "All of our guests have already retired for the day. How will Darens conduct your search?"

Jiang Yinghe peeped out to see the girl glanced at the low leveled stray ghosts around her. Her head spun in a complete circle before facing the manager again. "Bring out all the evidence you have collected."

The boy continued, "What things have you accepted?"

The manager didn't dare to dally. He immediately brought out all the payments he'd received. There were stones the size of goose eggs from the riverside, teacups from the landlady who sold seven emotion tea, a teardrop from an emotionless being...and the scrap of red cloth from Jiang Yinghe.

The two kids circled the items, looking at them this way and that. "The three Half-step Golden Immortals are all at the Patriarch's residence. The vengeful ghosts from the eighteen layers have all been recalled as well. They are waiting at You Ming Palace to be debriefed. We are just carrying out his orders..."

The two kids suddenly stopped muttering to themselves. The girl grasped the red fabric and brought it to her nose. She sighed, "How fragrant..."

The boy said, "Must be from a true beauty."

The girl blinked. "But the Patriarch is looking for an honoured guest."

The boy tilted his head at her, "Is this guest a true beauty?"

Their gazes met. Two voices answered together, "He is!"

Not only Jiang Yinghe, but even the manager was stunned by the thought processes of these two. He stuttered before agreeably complying, "Then this one will lead the way."

The ghost cultivators parted as they watched the two children walk towards the catacombs to the side. Discussions erupted everywhere.

"I saw that beauty come in. He was wearing a mask and seemed to be a rabbit devil in life."

"I've noticed him from the very beginning. His fragrant soul was enough to make my mouth water."

"I've heard that Jade Girl Daren brought back countless beauties with every search, but none of them were the right person."

Their words were very quiet. Neither of the children turned back as they entered the catacombs. There was a little devil in red seated before the table. He only reluctantly looked up as they approached.

The Jade Girl had a somewhat higher level of cultivation, so the delicious scent of his soul was even more prominent to her. She had to wipe at the corner of her mouth. Just as she was about to say her spiel about 'conducting official business' again, the red-clothed devil in front of her took off his mask.

Removing the grimacing mask revealed a handsome face with dark eyelashes and starry eyes below. The man was expressionless and aloof.

His finger touched the rim of the teacup and slowly circled around. "Are you two...little friends Qin Jun's helpers?"

The two both nodded before grumbling, "Just because you're good looking doesn't mean you can address the Patriarch by his name. Since you know already, then there's no reason to drag this out. Come back to You Ming Palace with us."

...That bastard was really using child labour.

Jiang Yinghe's thoughts veered off-track as he paused. Then he asked another question, "Then Qin Jun must favour you two a lot?"

The Golden Boy puffed up as he raised his chin. "We've already warned you to not directly call the Patriarch by his name."

The Jade Girl hugged his arm. "We're the Patriarch's most beloved subordinates!"

Jiang Yinghe nodded, "That's good. I just happened to have something to discuss with him."

He grasped Wangchen from its resting place by the table. The snow sword's icy body gleamed, even under the dim rays of light in the room.

Jiang Yinghe stood as he revealed his long-hidden cultivation. He shed his disguise. The tattered red cloak returned to being a soft, white robe. The overwhelming presence of an immortal more than strong enough to level the entire hotel condensed into being.

As the little ghosts outside began to panic and stampede towards the exit, a frosty sword light grazed over the entrance of the ancient tomb. The ground this 'hotel' was on was severed from the rest of the Nether Realm border. Then, the icy snow sword stabbed into the crevice, marking the divide with a sword light barrier that was as sharp as knives.

In the midst of the chaotic and miasma encrusted catacombs, Jiang Yinghe slowly knocked against the table several times as he glanced at the two

children. "You are not my opponents."

He was the leader of the cultivation world's righteous faction. There were scarcely any people on the level of his bastard disciples in the present world. But Jiang Yinghe wasn't made from paper-mache. As long as he wasn't up against them, he could sweep away their subordinates, no matter how 'beloved', with one hand.

Whether it was Li Huanhan's long time follower Chou Mojun or Xiao Mojun who had tried to use underhanded methods against him. Whether it was Devil Baron Sanqing who guarded Wanyao City on Chang Ye's behalf or Devil Baron Jiuying who had his core extracted, none of them could beat Jiang Yinghe alone.

He was a widely known sword cultivator after all.

"It is not honourable to bully the weak," Jiang Yinghe's tone was apologetic, "but I have been left with no choice. Little friends, I can only let one of you go to inform your Patriarch that I wish to discuss repairing the River Styx."

He emotionlessly looked at the two delicate and naive looking little friends as he issued a threat, "If Qin Jun doesn't agree to my demands, I will kill the one who remains."

He said it with an appropriate expression and serious tone, but the two children sensed no violent killing intent from him. They glanced at each other. The Golden Boy started, "But we..."

Jade Girl finished. "Are already dead."

Jiang Yinghe couldn't speak for a moment. He thought about what would be most terrifying to ghost cultivators and changed his approach. "...Then I'll have a good friend of mine who happens to be a buddist cultivator exorcise you all."

After that, the little ghosts that were eavesdropping from outside silently retreated to the corners and began to hug their knees and shake. Some even began to weep. Yingyingying

...He actually managed to frighten the ghosts?

—-

The atmosphere in You Ming Palace wasn't as peaceful as Jiang Yinghe had imagined.

"Are your people all useless after all?" Chang Ye crushed another teacup. His deviously beautiful face was filled with anxiety, "They've turned up nothing so far. This area isn't that big, Qin-shixiong. Your performance has been quite lacking."

He became even more hostile after he finished voicing his previous thought. "If it wasn't for you blowing your cover, this could've been delayed for a few more centuries. I could have slowly built up a relationship with Shizun..."

Qin Jun raised his eyes to give him a sweeping glance. He sneered, "Does a two-faced evil devil like you believe yourself to be spotless? Haven't you lied to him enough? You're truly worthy of being called the Devil King with how malicious and calculating you are."

Chang Ye slammed the cup down rim first. His expression was dark. "If a motherfucker like you can't handle it then leave it to the devil tribe. Do all you ghost cultivators lack brains? What if something happens when finding Shizun that offends him? The entirety of your Nether Realm wouldn't be enough to compensate."

"I'm only tolerating your tantrums for Shizun's sake." Qin Jun's steel-gray eyes were burrowing into Chang Ye. Aloof arrogance and killing intent were brewing in his eyes. "You acted so obedient and meek while deceiving him. If only Shizun could see you now."

As the atmosphere between the two became more tense, Li Huanhan, who has remained silent this whole time, suddenly opened his eyes.

...The presence of the sword pendant disappeared.

Wangchen was stored in Shizun's personal dimension, so there was no possibility of it being lost. Which meant...

Li Huanhan's heart sank. He already knew why Jiang Yinghe had destroyed the sword pendant. He raised a hand to his chest. It felt like even the slightest of movements from his internal demon infested heart created a sense of being constricted by burning chains of despair, which caused him unbearable agony.

He lowered his head and took in a deep breath. Something seemed to force itself out of his mouth from his lungs. It was only when it touched his tongue that he discovered it was a long suppressed mouthful of fresh blood.

Specks of it dotted his lips.

Li Huanhan wiped at the traces. He continued to look down and say nothing.

But the other two seemed to decide to stop at the same time to watch him wipe at the scarlet drops. Chang Ye stared momentarily and sighed as he came to a conclusion, "You lunatic. If I didn't know any better I would've never guessed you've been possessed by internal demons."

He was like a drunk person. His mind was still clear and his words calm, red herrings that hid his intoxication from the others. Only when he made decisions and acted upon them could Chang Ye sense Li Huanhan's insanity.

"Heavenly demons," Qin Jun laughed derisively, "are not so different from internal ones. They are both hypocritical evil cultivators."

Chang Ye sent him a warning glance. "Every crow in the world is the same shade of black. You talk as if you're any different."

When the two were about to argue again, the childish voice of a girl rang out from outside You Ming Palace. It held the characteristic empty serenity of ghost cultivators.

"Reporting to the Patriarch."

Qin Jun looked up and asked, "Did you find him?"

The Jade Girl hesitated. "We haven't found the honoured guest, but we found a true beauty."

Qin Jun didn't bother to hide his impatience, "Beauty schmuty. Don't come unless you find him."

He only noticed that the Golden Boy was missing after he finished speaking. When he was about to ask, he heard the slightly wilted voice of the Jade Girl.

"That beauty wants to meet the Patriarch." She said, "He said if you don't go, he'll exorcise the Golden Boy. This subordinate is not his opponent."

Exorcise? ...Did a buddhist cultivator come to the Nether Realm?

Qin Jun knew all about the tastes of these ghost cultivators. It was probably a buddhist cultivator with a holy aura about his entire body. As long as their soul was fragrant, the Jade Girl would call anyone a beauty. Qin Jun's temper was originally short, and her words only stoked the fire raging in him. He narrowed his eyes and said with a chilling tone, "He wants to see me, huh? Alright."

He stood; his dark long robes shifting with his movements. A sharp edge appeared in his dark and cold voice.

"I want to see—who exactly has the courage to demand such a thing?"

Author's Corner

You can go take a look, but don't start kneeling once you meet him

OceanofPDF.com

CH43 - EVEN THOSE WITH STEEL BACKBONES ARE PARTIAL TO WARMTH (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Wangchen was embedded into the crevice on the ground as freezing waves of intent enveloped the surroundings.

In the catacombs, Jiang Yinghe offered the cup of tea he poured before to the Golden Boy. The delicate child, who seemed to be carved from jade, was supporting his chin with his hands, like he was wilting.

"What's the matter?" Jiang Yinghe pushed over the cup as he spoke, "Are you sad about leaving your sister?"

The Golden Boy accepted the cup and quickly gulped down all of the blue-green tea. His eyelids drooped. "Our soul is shared. She can't be too far from me for too long."

Jiang Yinghe grew more curious about the tastes of ghost cultivators after seeing him down the Nether Realm's tea. However, he didn't ask about that, instead saying, "The essence of heaven and earth condense into spirits. How can two distinct consciousnesses arise out of the same soul?"

"Twins are relatives," the Golden Boy said, "but they are also opponents, even from before birth."

He didn't act in the slightest like a hostage that was trapped. Instead, the Golden Boy reached out chubby little hands to hug Jiang Yinghe's arm on

the table. He closed his eyes and fell asleep just like that.

Perhaps it was because the Jade Girl was away, but his presence seemed to become more insubstantial.

Ghost cultivators have no weight in their original forms. It was only when they created a solid form that they had mass. Jiang Yinghe could feel the weight of the child's body.

Wasn't he supposed to be the bad guy? Why was he coaxing children to sleep now...

Jiang Yinghe was a little distracted before he noticed the resentful energy stir and blow over like a storm. Qin Jun's voice came from the sky, as if he was right beside his ear.

"An arrogant and foolish buddhist cultivator dares to mess around in the Nether Realm?"

An extremely potent wave of miasma swept over with malicious intent, but —

It came to a sudden halt before Wangchen.

The deep darkness contrasted with the blinding sheen of frost. It braked and swerved to the side to avoid collision.

The deafening sound stopped all at once. In the next moment, the entire tomb was split open by a sword light and reduced to ruins. However, none of the flying dust and gravel hit the area around Jiang Yinghe.

Qin Jun appeared from within the dark whirlpool and landed. His originally sharp and vicious aura vanished at once. He stood not far away from Jiang Yinghe and stared at him with eyes filled with disbelief. After being apart for so many days, he almost felt like he was dreaming.

The one on his mind all this time had appeared in front of him with his usual calm demeanour and white robes.

The little ghosts had already fled in all directions when the sword light pierced the tomb.

All was silent.

His anger and killing intent had already evaporated when the miasma hit Wangchen.

But just as Qin Jun took a step, Jiang Yinghe turned his head and glanced at him, gesturing for him to remain still. Qin Jun stopped at once. He was afraid that if he disobeyed him, he would frighten the other away—he was as careful as if a butterfly had fallen in front of him.

It's hard to imagine that a person could still have so much self control when they believed themselves to be in a dream.

Jiang Yinghe carefully lifted the Golden Boy's head to withdraw his sleeve from his hands. He slowly lowered the child before standing and looking at Qin Jun.

The Jade Girl followed behind Qin Jun. She looked between the beauty and the Patriarch with an inexplicable expression. Suddenly she had a thought, 'The Patriarch is finally enamoured!' She knew that no one could resist the charms of this astounding beauty.

But the current silence was unsettling. It made people's hearts surge before falling into an illusion of near suffocation.

Qin Jun only spoke when Jiang Yinghe had retracted his sleeve, retrieved Wangchen and walked over to him. His voice was unusually hoarse, "Shizun...are, are you not leaving?"

Jiang Yinghe could hear a hidden plea within his words that revealed his pain.

Only then did he realize that this man, who has always been extremely conceited, had low moments like this as well.

Jiang Yinghe seemed to see the silhouettes of the other two overlap with his. Li Huanhan, who was more gentle, careful and restrained than Qin Jun, was the first one to fill the blackened status bar. Beneath Li Huanhan's restrained and gentle facade was enough jealousy and desire to render him immobile. His heart was stretched to the breaking point and beyond.

And beneath Chang Ye's cute and obedient demeanour was a whole era of violence and darkness. His bloodstained victories had warped him into a person with two faces. His intensity was enough to make others' hearts become cold.

Jiang Yinghe raised a finger to his lips. "Shh... The Golden Boy is asleep. Let's go somewhere else to speak."

If it was the him from before, he would be angry at Qin Jun's lies, and worried about how ghost cultivators cultivated by devouring souls. But now —

He has already sensed Qin Jun's intentions and come to accept that there was something wrong with his own ability to reciprocate. Moreover, there was a pressing need to discuss repairing the River Styx with him. After several rounds of adjusting his own attitude, Jiang Yinghe wasn't very angry at all.

Not only for the sake of his feelings or his request, the main reason was Jiang Yinghe's own character. He showed no mercy to the demonic cultivators who opposed him, but he was unable to truly regard the disciple he had reared at his side for such a long time as an enemy.

Jiang Yinghe had always wanted to lead his disciples towards the light. He didn't believe in the inevitability of fate, and he wouldn't give up either.

The Jade Girl remained with her brother. After Jiang Yinghe withdrew Wangchen, he and Qin Jun set off. They passed by desolate graveyards, springs filled with the howling of vengeful ghosts and stopped at the riverside of the source of all reincarnations, the River Styx.

They could see the chasm in the center that seemed to split the sky in two from their current location.

Jiang Yinghe stared out for a long time before speaking. "Huanhan and Chang Ye are both in the Nether Realm?"

Qin Jun stared at the side of his face visible to him. "En."

"Don't tell them yet." Jiang Yinghe recalled that, of the two, one was unpredictable due to being possessed by internal demons and the other was sweet outside and devious inside. He wanted to put off dealing with such a complicated mess for now. "They'll make a fuss if they know. Let me have a few days of quiet. ...There is more than just your sword light present in this wound...Wanwu Canxia was used as well?"

Qin Jun glanced at him again. "The sword Li Huanhan used wasn't Wanwu Canxia, it's called Jimie."

"...En." Jiang Yinghe sighed, "It was all lies. I should've known."

Wanwu Canxia and Junzi Tie were both famed swords he had gifted his disciples from the Sword Viewing Scroll, but they weren't enough for these two in the end. The Xuehe Demon Lord's personal sword was called Jimie, and Qin Jun's sword was even more well known. It was the infamous Zhanyun sword.

Qin Jun couldn't bear to see him so dejected, but he was the number one culprit. There were no words of comfort he could offer.

"What about Chang Ye?" Jiang Yinghe thought back. He had never seen Chang Ye use the sabre even though he carried it everywhere with him, "Is his personal artifact that flute?"

"Yes." Qin Jun looked at him as he said this, "It's called Duanshe Li. But I heard from him that this wasn't the original name. Besides, based on that devil's personality, he's not capable of leaving behind his emotions and severing bonds anyway."

Jiang Yinghe nodded as he continued to look at the opposite bank of the river where a boatman was resting on his ferry. He was silent for a good moment as he considered the situation. It was impossible to tell how he felt about all this. Finally, he spoke again, "Why not fix the River Styx that governs over reincarnation? You already know that the heavens cannot tolerate you, and that actions that go against the natural order shouldn't be taken, so why continue to rebel?"

Qin Jun reached over and carefully touched Jiang Yinghe's fingers before enveloping Shizun's hand with his own. "I've been preoccupied as of late. There was no time to tend to this matter."

"Why be in such a hurry to find me? Am I really more important than this?" Jiang Yinghe didn't protest, but he also didn't look at him, "I've taught you all to not lie to yourselves. I have also always thought that our relationship was simply that of a master and his disciple, pure and untainted. But after I recently learned of something, I'm beginning to suspect that...maybe I have been lying to myself. It's just that I can't sense all of my feelings for now."

His words were very implicit and roundabout, but Qin Jun noticed the unusual qualities in his speech. He slowly tightened his grip on the joints of Shizun's fingers and asked quietly, "I was the one who wronged you first. It's too late for me to turn back now, but Shizun was the victim of this undeserved catastrophe. What do you have to be ashamed of?"

Qin Jun left many things unsaid. He wanted to plead with the other to remain by his side and not abandon him again, but the words refused to leave his mouth.

Every second after Jiang Yinghe left, he felt like his mind was about to splinter. Half wanted to forcefully imprison him and make this person be with him forever, but the other half was constantly regretting how he treated Shizun.

Despite knowing he was in the wrong, why did he act so shamelessly after his identity was revealed? Did he forget how to respect this person like he used to do?

Only after learning how to respect could he learn how to love a person. These were the words that Jiang Yinghe once imparted to him. But only when Shizun reappeared before him did Qin Jun truly understand what they meant.

Jiang Yinghe did not notice his revelation. He sighed: "Jun-er, if you are in the dark and see a ray of moonlight before you, it is natural to feel possessive towards it. However, you need to head towards the place shone upon by the light, not pull it towards the darkness around you. Do you understand?"

It had been a long time since he was called that. It reminded him of the distant past.

"I..." Qin Jun's words came to a stop. The tension in his voice gradually seeped out, "This disciple understands...but it's too late now."

"It's not too late." Jiang Yinghe shifted his gaze over to the crystalline surface of the lake, "...It's never too late to understand this."

He seemed reluctant to speak more about that topic, saying instead, "Fixing the River Styx would be a monumental task, even for you. But please consider this my request for...for myself."

"Not for the sake of all living beings?"

Jiang Yinghe was amused by his question. He laughed before lightly coughing. "I'm no messiah or philanthropist. This is simply repaying my debts. I am also to blame for the trouble you guys have caused. Think of it as a part of my duty as an educator... Luckily, you didn't stuff me in a small dark room again to talk."

Qin Jun asked, "What if, what if I really did do that. What would happen?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't really want to answer this question, so he didn't reply. Instead, he somewhat relaxed and began to lighten up. "Let's talk about how I can help while you repair the River Styx. Or maybe about whether you would stop fighting with the Tian Mo School and recall all your troops in

the Human Realm if I asked you. ...But even if you listened, there's nothing I can promise in return."

He turned to meet a pair of deeply focused eyes. The other person spoke in a serious voice.

"...There's no need for anything else. Shizun only needs to remain by my side, and I will repair the River Styx and stop fighting with the others." He paused before continuing, "But if you don't mind...could you kiss me? Just once?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback.

That feeling appeared again. It was like a melody building up to its crescendo, the notes resonating with the deepest parts of your soul, before suddenly screeching to a halt. It was like a pot of water coming to a rolling boil before being flash frozen. He could feel everything and nothing at once. He could hear the reverbing echo within the chamber and the fireworks launching from the tip of his heart...but it was all very distant. Everything, upon reaching a climax, was lost to an all-encompassing emptiness and calm.

In the end, there was nothing left.

He took in a slight breath, like it was his first time doing so. It was the first time he had searched for the missing part of himself. He reached out to hold Qin Jun's shoulder.

He quietly asked one thing.

"Is this...what you want?"

Qin Jun heard his gentle and restrained voice. Then, that pair of slightly cool lips made contact. They were as light as water, like the cold dew on branches and leaves in late autumn, as they enveloped his in a tender kiss.

His steel backbone was always partial to warmth.

Qin Jun's palm pressed against his waist, but he didn't dare to do anything more. He was always arrogant, self-centred and even unruly. Only when kissing him would Qin Jun lower his head.

The wings of a dragonfly skimmed over the surface of the lake.

Jiang Yinghe could clearly sense each individual ripple on the water surface. But their motion was halted by the barrier in his heart. He had lost the right to feel emotions. He closed his eyes and distanced himself from the other, taking a step back. "...I can't do this."

"Can't do...what?"

"Peng Lai has always been righteous and just. I—"

"I would rather remain as a master to you all forever then to do something I will regret for the rest of my life."

"Shizun?"

It was just as Qin Jun had once imagined. Jiang Yinghe's waist was narrow and far too light when he covered it. A single spin would allow the other person to break free from his grasp.

He stared at Jiang Yinghe's back as he looked out into the glittering emerald surface of the lake. His eyes and heart only had room for this snow white figure.

Qin Jun knew he had been wrong, but this was the first time he felt how much of a mistake he had made.

The silence lasted for a very long time. Who would've thought that such a tranquil and peaceful scene could exist in the Nether Realm? Qin Jun stared as Jiang Yinghe sat by the riverside. His flawlessly white sleeves drifted into the lake.

He heard the other person's soft words.

"I can't trample over the feelings you three hold for me." Jiang Yinghe said, "If I could feel love, I could only give my heart to one person, and not..."

He didn't want to admit to himself that he had felt that split-second surging storm of emotions at some point for all of them. He just didn't know what to look for at the time. But now that he knew what it meant, he felt ashamed.

Qin Jun's eyes were fixated on his back for a long time. A fragment of something seemed to flash by in his mind too quickly to catch. He didn't give much thought to it as he asked, "What do you mean by 'feeling love'? Can Shizun not...experience that emotion?"

He didn't hear Jiang Yinghe's reply. He only saw the other person's fingertips that shone with the sheen of frost dip into the River Styx. The water parted as ripples radiated outward, scattering the light reflected within.

At the bottom of the river, the scattered fragments of souls that could not reincarnate drifted. The dust of mortal affairs was gradually washed away by the ebb and flow of the waves.

Jiang Yinghe still had turned his back to him as he said, "You all have the right to know about this...but I haven't had the chance to ask about the details myself. This place is quiet, so I'll do it now."

He retrieved that transmission tablet and redirected his spiritual energy into it. The destination was on the western continent—Peng Lai.

Author's Corner

The end of your ponytail, which I had once kissed, was the softest liquid I had ever touched. –Lyrics from ' '

Qin Jun: sry, the one who went too far was me. I know my faults Shizun...

Rain

Many revelations await in the next chapter... Also, we are just about half way through this novel! Thanks for joining us on this journey thus far

Sahl

Did everyone pick up on the foreshadowing hint of what some of our lovely readers have already said?

OceanofPDF.com

CH44 - MEOW~ (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Zhou Zhengping's voice could be heard the moment the transmission tablet flashed.

"Shidi?"

Jiang Yinghe made a soft noise in reply, then asked, "Zhangmen-shixiong, how is the situation with Peng Lai?"

"Everything is under control. It's just that we can't contact Xiao Yun-shidi right now. Are you safe? Where are you? We'll come get you right away."

Zhou Zhengping's usually placid tone was interlaced with traces of impatience and anxiety. It seemed like he was extremely worried.

Jiang Yinghe quickly assured him, "I'm safe for now, so Shixiong needn't worry... There's just one think that I hoped Shixiong could clarify for me."

Zhou Zhengping responded immediately. "Ask away."

"In the Nether Realm, I drank a cup of Seven Emotion Tea, but I had an unusual reaction to it." Jiang Yinghe paused, "Am I missing something...that ordinary people should have?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't directly say it, but Qin Jun already knew what was going on. He sharply turned his head to look at his Shizun's lowered lashes from the side.

Zhou Zhengping became sombre.

There was no need for further questions. Jiang Yinghe knew that he knew something about this. He sighed at Zhou Zhengping's continued hesitation. "Shixiong, please give me an explanation."

"You," Zhou Zhengping began after a pause, "do you know about the Endless Sky Watchtower?"

Of course Jiang Yinghe had heard of this place before. Somewhat shocked, he exclaimed, "I do. Ten thousand years ago, during the civil war of the devils, Tianhou sealed the Devil God at the time into the Endless Sky Watchtower. It is said that the creator of this world lives atop the tower."

"Correct." said Zhou Zhengping, "The Devil God, Hundun, was a being of high cultivation. When humanity was at its weakest, when the skies were shuttered in perpetual darkness, when everything was in chaos, this Devil God was struck by Tianhou...or, rather, Chang Ye, when he was in the midst of ascension. He braved the heavenly lightning to pierce through Hundun's devil core with one strike."

"This I know." Jiang Yinghe found it hard to not think of Chang Ye. His mind just couldn't reconcile the person he knew with his history. "The two fell together, and the devil race gradually weakened."

"Exactly." Zhou Zhengping said, "Since even Chang Ye had a way to revive himself, don't you find it strange that Hundun, who was a step away from ascending, has been so quiet for ten thousand years?"

Jiang Yinghe jolted. He connected the dots from Zhangmen-shixiong's words and hurried to ask, "Did something happen at the Endless Sky Tower?"

The person on the other end of the transmission tablet sighed heavily. Zhou Zhengping quietly admitted, "There had been strange phenomena occurring there for quite some time."

Jiang Yinghe knew how dangerous this situation could become. Just as he was about to ask about possible solutions, he heard Zhangmen-shixiong follow up on his words.

"But it was temporarily settled."

"...Does this have something to do with me?"

"En." Zhou Zhengping said, "When we discovered the phenomena at the tower, we discussed the problem constantly. We came up with a solution and expended a lot of effort to place an array on top of the tower. There are...two keystones in the array, corresponding to emotion and lack thereof. These keystones are passion roots taken from two people. You are not the only one who had your passion root extracted. It's just that..."

Jiang Yinghe could guess who the other person was after hearing all of this, "The other person...is Tong Guiyu."

"Yes. He was born a very emotional person, and he cultivates using He Huan Sect methods. Therefore, the apathetic part of his passion root was removed. Chan Qing, being a buddhist cultivator with clear meridians and high cultivation, set up the array. And you..." Zhou Zhengping sighed, "The part of your..."

Before Jiang Yinghe could reply, Qin Jun spoke from beside him.

"How do we replace it?" He asked, "It's just a devil sealed there. What's there to be afraid of? Why don't we be more proactive and cut the problem out at the root?."

He was about to continue, but Jiang Yinghe lightly rapped his knuckle on Qin Jun's forehead. His tone was distant, "You make it sound so simple. The various races have barely recovered from Chang Ye and Hundun's bout ten thousand years ago, and you want such a disaster to be repeated? You three would be fine, but what about everyone else?"

Qin Jun held onto his finger. He was not content to give up just yet. He stared into Jiang Yinghe's eyes. "Then Shizun is content to live like this forever? To cultivate for hundreds or thousands of years, never able to feel love for anyone?"

Jiang Yinghe pulled his finger away. "Since I told you, you should calm down and restrain yourself. Fixing the River Styx is more important. Then you should issue a ceasefire with the others. After that...I will have to think about this some more."

Qin Jun could feel his hand slowly slipping away, so he stubbornly tightened his grip. Jiang Yinghe was unable to break free for a moment. He raised his head to meet Qin Jun's intent stare. "That's enough. Let go."

The other only relaxed his grip a fraction after hearing his words. He then hesitantly released his hand.

At this time, the previously silent Zhou Zhengping on the other side of the transmission tablet finally exclaimed, "...Patriarch Qin is with you?"

Everything came to a head so suddenly that Zhou Zhengping was still unused to their new identities. But he knew that these three had caused a lot of trouble recently, and all for the sake of his Jiang-shidi.

Jiang Yinghe spoke up. "En...he's here."

"...I see." Zhou Zhengping said, "The procedure to extract passion roots is extremely agonizing. With the abbot's help, we were able to erase your memories, but it seems you found out anyway. The reason that Tong Guiyu is Acting Sect Master right now is also because the He Huan Sect Master at the time made a mistake when erasing his memories that affected his cultivation. Which is why he has been in seclusion ever since."

"You've all worked hard." Jiang Yinghe said this with complicated emotions.

He was missing his passion root and no one had told him, but it was for a very good cause so...

"If my guess is correct, Xiao Yun-shidi should still be in devil territory. Even if his soul lamp and card are fine, we still need to find him."

"We know." Zhou Zhengping then reminded him, "The same goes for you. Be careful. Also, could you pass on a message to Patriarch Qin and the other two?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He glanced at Qin Jun beside him. He wasn't sure what Zhangmen-shixiong was about to say. He cautiously agreed, "Alright. If I get the chance, I will relay the message."

Zhou Zhengping cleared his throat, "This one's Jiang-shidi is a kind man. He will have a complication involving romance that could become life-threatening in the future. The decision hundreds of years ago was the best solution we could come up with. If the Patriarch really intends to stay with him for a lifetime, you should not attempt to retrieve his passion root."

"Shixiong..."

"Even if two individuals become lovers, who's to say how long they will last? Ten years? A hundred? Before his test of mentality is overcome, how can you talk about far-away concepts like forever? In addition, this one knows his Shidi is a man of morals. He treats everyone impartially and takes his role as an educator seriously. How can the Patriarch be sure that you are the only person in his heart?"

"Shixiong! I will explain the situation to them..."

"You be quiet." This was the first time that Zhou Zhengping had interrupted Jiang Yinghe in such a stern manner, "Don't you think I know what you're like? It's good enough already that you haven't sold yourself."

He remained silent for a moment before continuing, "Even if your feelings are mutual, death is the only way your relationship can end. Patriarch Qin, do you really want to see Jiang Yinghe's thousand years of cultivation wasted as he remains unable to become one with the Dao in his last moments? A tribulation of love can occur at any time. It could be when he ascends, or it could be in the next second. Unlike the Patriarch, we righteous cultivators are as ephemeral as dust. Who doesn't know how difficult the path to enlightenment can be?"

Qin Jun was born a wraith. Naturally, he had help on his cultivation journey.

"Patriarch Qin," Zhou Zhengping continued, "If you want to dismantle this array, you must keep these points in mind and join forces with the other two to kill Hundun. Only when you give your opponent no opportunity to retaliate can it be called cutting the problem out at the root. If you go alone, you would only be destroying the world as we know it... That's all I have to say. Please think on my words."

With that, the light on the transmission tablet dimmed.

Jiang Yinghe kneaded the tablet as he glanced in Qin Jun's direction. He thought about what to say then sighed. "Although my Shixiong's words were a bit...excessive, they hold merit."

This truly wasn't a problem that could be resolved quickly. Zhangmen-shixiong was his elder by many years, so his consideration for situations had become very thorough.

Jiang Yinghe was simply thinking about how to comfort Qin Jun. Just as he decided on the first sentence, he was suddenly embraced by the other after raising his eyes.

The sky was dark, and an emerald expanse of water ebbed before him.

The breathing at his ear was somewhat disorganized. The sound made his heart twist into knots.

"I know." Qin Jun's lips touched his earlobe, imparting a sensation of heat. "We—we can take things slowly. You don't need to be afraid anymore. I know that my actions from before were wrong. I won't do anything to make you angry again..."

He seemed to be deeply traumatized by how Jiang Yinghe might die without becoming one with the Dao.

"Don't just worry about this, alright? I'm still here and I won't leave you again. "

Jiang Yinghe thought that Qin Jun's raspy voice was like ground up pieces of cold steel. The stronger it was, the more it silently suffered in agony, shattering when he spoke.

"Even though...I'm one of them."

Jiang Yinghe wrapped his hands around his back and quietly soothed him. "I know. I won't leave you behind. Could you loosen your grip? It's too tight. You're hurting me a bit."

The arms around him slackened momentarily before stubborning encircling him once again. But they were more cautious this time.

Jiang Yinghe patted him on the back. "Since ancient times, there have been countless individuals who had to face such tribulations. But those that fell to them were just a handful."

The other person was silent for a moment. "...That's because they all died before it came to pass."

Jiang Yinghe had nothing to say to that. He tried again, "Some have successfully overcome their tribulation of love. I heard that Abbot Chan Qin is one of them..."

Qin Jun stared at him."...He did so by becoming a monk."

Jiang Yinghe, "..."

—-

The entire Nether Realm was in a bit of a muddled state.

Their Patriarch had begun focusing his efforts on fixing the River Styx, so his attempts to find a cultivation partner seemed more just for show. On another note, demonic and devilish cultivators were becoming a more common sight with every passing day. They were as high strung as if they had come home after half a year away to find their significant other three months with child, all wearing green hats from a distance.

The Darens of the Nether Realm had nothing to do as well. The Jade Girl and the Golden Boy had already spent three days at the tea parlour. Every day, they ordered eight scoops of envious fire and two cups of lovesick infatuation. It was like they were on vacation.

The landlady had served many devils recently, so she paid no mind to their presence in the Nether Realm. She poured tea while chatting with the Golden Boy, "Has our Patriarch found the person he was looking for? Or has he really shifted the object of his affections?"

The Golden Boy held a cup brimming with tea. He shook his head, "He didn't find them."

The Jade Girl took a bite of her white candle. "He's found someone else."

The landlady leaned against a wall as she tapped at her pipe to dislodge the ashes. "Can you two Darens tell me more about this new person? The Patriarch's been single for so long. It must have taken quite the individual to change his mind."

Jade Girl spoke, "A little devil."

Golden Boy added, "But he's a ghost cultivator already. He's very pretty."

"How pretty could he be?" the landlady snorted, "The little rabbit devil I saw a few days ago, now that's a real beauty."

As soon as she finished, there was suddenly a devil clothed in red beside her that spoke.

"A rabbit devil?" he said, "How beautiful was he? Was he wearing white?"

"Beautiful enough that all the ghost cultivators who saw him wanted a piece." The landlady appeared quite pleased, "He was wearing red and a mask with a twisted expression, but I could tell from his figure and scent that he was definitely a great beauty."

The Golden Boy met the eyes of the Golden Girl. "After such a long struggle, the Patriarch has fallen to the charms of another soul."

The landlady crinkled her eyes as she hummed. Then she turned to look at the devil that spoke before, "This shop mainly caters to the tastes of ghost cultivators. Quite impressive how a devil like you managed to drink so much tea."

The devil in red raised an eyebrow. "A pot empties quickly when you think about beauties. Landlady, do you happen to know where that rabbit devil is now?"

"How could I possibly know that?" the landlady laughed, "But I heard some little ghosts say that a pleasure boat had appeared on the River Styx recently. The Patriarch often frequents it, so could he be hiding a beauty inside a golden boat?"

The Jade Girl asked, "What's a golden boat?"

The Golden Boy pointed at himself. "Is it a boat like me?"

The devil in red ignored the two of them and spoke to the landlady. "This tea is very nice. May I know its name?"

The landlady sucked on her pipe and got a closer look at the ordinary face of this devil. She carefully sniffed at his soul. "I would've told you even if you didn't ask. I've never seen someone drink an entire pot of Unknown Worry without noticing."

The expression of the devil in red didn't change. He heard the landlady say, "It contains burning jealousy and yearning between lovers. The taste is supposed to be bitter and sour enough to make your mouth numb and difficult to swallow. Little devil, has your heart been broken recently?"

After saying that, she turned to busy herself elsewhere. She didn't see the tightening fingers of the youth dig crescents into his palms.

The devil in red bade a swift farewell. Upon putting some distance between him and the tea parlour, the glamour he wore instantly disappeared. Chang Ye's half-masked beauty was once again revealed. He stood by the riverside and sighed deeply.

...As he thought, Qin Jun had already found him.

Chang Ye gazed into the distance where the sky was split, his mind clouded with indecipherable thoughts. After a moment of contemplation, he dipped his hand into the River Styx.

—-

A pleasure boat appeared from within the thick fog to traverse the portion of the river that had just been reconnected. This was a matter that required utmost concentration and effort. It wasn't something that could be completed in a day.

Jiang Yinghe was seated in the front of the boat. He watched as this artifact glided through the River Styx. As if sensing his contentment, his rabbit ears twitched unconsciously.

...He'd been wearing these things for so long he had almost gotten used to them.

On several occasions, Qin Jun had spaced out while staring at the snow white rabbit ears. The look in his eyes was strange. What was so interesting about these ears? Jiang Yinghe had tried many times to remove them, but that little scoundrel Chang Ye must have done something while putting them on. They were here to stay for now.

There was no distinction between day and night in the Nether Realm. Jiang Yinghe could only depend on his circadian rhythm. He had become more drowsy as of late. Just as he grew tired once again, he heard the blood-curdling screams of the living spirits in the lake.

He jolted awake and noticed that the boat dipped slightly, as if something had jumped aboard. Jiang Yinghe looked up. Only then did he notice that the pleasure boat had neared the shore at some point.

The fog had dissipated to reveal the churning waters beneath.

Just as Jiang Yinghe wanted to check on the condition of the boat, he heard a weak 'meow'.

...A cat?

He looked towards the source of the sound. There was a drenched kitten sitting at the bow of the boat. Its dark eyes were very round, with a full coat of long white hair. There were tufts of light gray fur at the end of its pointy ears. Its long furry tail waved in the air slightly like a damp feather duster.

There was no miasma coming from it, so it seemed to be a kitten that recently became sentient. It couldn't even be considered a devil at this point... Was it trying to catch fish in the lake?

There were no fish it could catch in the River Styx.

Jiang Yinghe pondered about this for a while before rifling through his personal dimension. When he remembered that he had been practising inedia for a long time, and that the kitten might not be able to eat whatever he had stored, a big and fluffy tail captured his ankle.

He lowered his head to meet the kitten's inky black eyes.

"Meow—" The kitten tilted his head at him.

Author's Corner

The living spirits in the river: Aaaaahhhh what is this thing, get it away from me!!! Wuwuwuwuwu!!!

HeHe: ...How pitiful. You must have been bullied.

A certain devious kitten: Meow~

Rain

Haha Chang Ye figured out the optimum strategy to deal with his Shizun. In the original comments they were calling him a green tea cat lol.

Sahl

Chang Ye: Shizun no longer thinks I'm his cute third disciple. I must fix this! *Increases cuteness factor to MAXIMUM*

OceanofPDF.com

CH45 - BACKWARD BARBS (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The kitten mewled. It shook off the water on its body before hopping onto Jiang Yinghe's knees.

But there were still water droplets clinging stubbornly to its fur. It was wet to the touch. Jiang Yinghe took out a soft and fluffy towel as he half-held the long-haired cat. He asked while he dried it, "Where is your owner?"

This kind of recently sentient kitten was often raised by other devils. If they weren't siblings, then they were to be a future spouse. Jiang Yinghe heard about this from people at Wanyao City, so he could guess why it pounced on him.

After all, his current appearance did seem to resemble an elder devil, and a harmless herbivore at that.

The kitten's large tail had gray streaks running through it. It wrapped around his wrist several times. The tip tickled his skin as tiny paws kneaded against his arms cutely.

"Meow—"

Jiang Yinghe was caught by this kitten. Even after wiping it dry, he couldn't help but give it scratches under its chin. Comfortable, the kitten raised its head to expose more of its neck.

He didn't expect to see a live kitten in a place like the Nether Realm... On second thought, there must be many devils here at the moment. Chang Ye

should be very anxious by now.

Jiang Yinghe made a rough estimate. He decided to let that little scoundrel stew for a while. Chang Ye's specialty was deceiving others with his beautiful features and pretending to be pitiful after all. This kitten was much better company than him.

Besides, he was helping Qin Jun repair the River Styx right now, as it was the most pressing matter. It wouldn't be too late to go find Xiao Yun-shidi later if Zhangmen-shixiong still couldn't contact him...

As Jiang Yinghe spaced out, something that felt like sandpaper swept across his fingertips. He turned his head to see the backwards barbs on the little kitten's tongue. It was undoubtedly a carnivore.

It butted Jiang Yinghe's palm with its soft forehead while pressing down on his finger with its paw. The kitten peeked at him before licking him again.

..What a mischievous sprite.

For some reason, Jiang Yinghe was reminded of Chang Ye. While admonishing the bigger mischievous sprite in his head, he collected the kitten into his arms and rubbed its face. He joked, "Are you a little cat that would let anyone who feeds you pet you?"

The kitten paused before rapidly nodding its head.

Jiang Yinghe, "...Cough. How permissive."

He took out a small fruit brimming with spiritual energy from his personal dimension and offered it to the kitten. It was quick to climb partially onto his hands and devour the fruit. It stared at him unblinkingly as it munched on its bounty.

Jiang Yinghe paid the fare, so he continued to pet the kitten's soft and fuzzy little head with satisfaction. He teased, "Did your owner abandon you because you were too sticky?"

At first, the kitten didn't react. Then it seemed to become saddened. It laid in Jiang Yinghe's lap and nodded.

"Someone was heartless enough to abandon a beautiful cat like this?" Jiang Yinghe was surprised. He paused: "Then...would you like to come with me?"

There was really nothing edible in an environment like the Nether Realm. Even if there were fish deep within the River Styx, they were grotesque and misshapen dead spirit fish. It was certainly not something suitable for a newly sentient kitten to survive off.

By the end, Jiang Yinghe had convinced himself of his decision. He reached out a hand, "If you agree, then give your little paw to me."

Before he finished speaking, a tender and pink paw immediately squished down on his hand. It was like the owner was afraid of Jiang Yinghe running off. The kitten pounced on his face and held on there.

Jiang Yinghe tried his best to keep breathing through the fuzz as he removed this little ancestor from his face. "Don't be so naughty. Let me think about how to raise a cat."

The knowledge of Earth he had sealed away for many years slowly began to surface. A moment passed before Jiang Yinghe spoke again. "Check for parasites, vaccinations, and...um..."

Jiang Yinghe cautiously glanced at the mewling kitten, "...neutering?"

The previously overjoyed kitten immediately stiffened. It slowly backed away a few steps before zipping under the table.

As Jiang Yinghe went to retrieve it, the kitten grasped onto his sleeve and stared at him with watery eyes. His heart became soft in an instant. "Fine, fine, fine. I won't neuter you, so be quiet."

The little kitten looked at him for a while longer before releasing its claws and snuggling into Jiang Yinghe's chest.

The pleasure boat drifted along the waves.

The sky was becoming darker as the turbulent emerald water stirred. Qin Jun arrived to such a scene.

The table was filled with documents lined with rows of neat writing on the materials needed for the reconstruction of the river. Jiang Yinghe's internal clock was even more accurate than an actual clock. He was fast asleep on the table.

He was wearing a pastel white cloak. The sleeves had slid back to reveal his narrow wrists. Inky black hair cascaded down his shoulders. A white long-haired cat was resting as well in Shizun's lap. Only when Qin Jun entered the boat did its ears twitch in his direction.

Qin Jun glanced at the cat once before removing his cape and gently covering Jiang Yinghe with it. Then he grabbed that cat by the scruff of its neck and exited to the back of the boat.

He threw the little white cat to the ground and watched it sit. Qin Jun sneered, "I didn't think you were desperate enough to take on this kind of form. How shameless, San-er."

A thousand year old fox was here pretending to be an innocent kitten.

The little cat lightly landed on the stern of the boat. He wagged his tail and smugly said, "I'm not nearly as skilled as Qin-shixiong. If I felt shame, could I sleep with Shizun? If not, then I have no need of such a thing."

"Shizun doesn't want to see you." Qin Jun's voice was chilled, "Keep your tail to yourself. Don't make him angry. Also...don't let Li Huanhan find him."

Chang Ye was one thing, but Li Huanhan's mind was twisted. There was no way to reason with that guy.

"Oh come on. Of course I know that." The white cat flicked his tail, "You're such an amateur, hiding him in such a conspicuous place."

"Yet you still came crawling to me after losing him," Qin Jun shot back.

Chang Ye gave him a flat look. "Who knew that our Li-shixiong had so many tricks up his sleeve? He actually put a tracking artifact on Shizun's body. But don't you worry. I've already planned for the possibility of him coming."

"...Care to elaborate?"

"Pah. Our Li-shixiong is a lunatic of few words. It's good enough that Shizun hasn't formally ended their master-disciple relationship, so what is there to be afraid of, meow?" The kitten licked its paws before sauntering back inside, "Qin-shixiong, I'm just a cat. Don't do anything too outrageous to me, ah."

Qin Jun felt a pounding migraine coming on. Just as he was about to recapture this green tea cat, he heard Jiang Yinghe's warm voice from within.

"Jun-er?"

He breathed out before following Chang Ye inside. Qin Jun spoke to Shizun as if nothing was amiss. "Did I wake you?"

"No." Jiang Yinghe didn't expect to fall asleep just now. He removed the cape from his shoulders and returned it to Qin Jun. "I woke up myself."

He lowered his head to look at the kitten he'd recently taken in brushing repeatedly against the hem of his robes. He picked it up and saw that Qin Jun's gaze was fixated on the white cat in his arms.

Jiang Yinghe paused. He supposed it was human nature to like soft and cute animals. "...Do you also want a feel?"

Why would Qin Jun want to feel this little natural green tea? He lifted his head with a complicated expression. "Shizun, does this cat have a name yet?"

"Not yet." Jiang Yinghe said, "How about Baibai? What do you think?"

Qin Jun glanced at it. A smile that was more of a grimace graced his features. "Those with humble names are easier to raise. Why don't we call it Cuihua?"

Jiang Yinghe nodded uncertainly. "...Alright."

—-

Never in his life did Chang Ye think that one day he would be called Cuihua.

That bastard Qin Jun chatted with Shizun for hours. He somehow convinced their befuddled Shizun to accept the name he had proposed.

This washed away some of his happiness at returning to Shizun's side.

...Qin Jun really was a bastard.

Chang Ye's teeth itched to bite into something. If it wasn't for the fact that he was supposed to be an obedient and cute little kitten, he would probably go tear Qin Jun apart limb from limb right now.

His only source of comfort was that Qin Jun eventually had to leave. There was a distance that he had to maintain with Shizun, but a little kitten like Chang Ye could even sleep inside the pleasure boat. It was clear who the victor was. Minus that name and the threatening look Qin Jun shot him before leaving, everything seemed perfect.

Other than fixing the River Styx, Qin Jun was also recalling the Forces of Hell. He retired to You Ming Palace to continue his preparations. Chang Ye wasn't worried about being exposed. They were two peas in a pod, so what was there to be afraid of?

He was happy enough to knead as he remained by Shizun's side.

The little white cat laid in Jiang Yinghe's lap while rubbing affectionately against his hand. He heard Shizun's gentle voice, "It is important to get enough sleep after becoming sentient." Jiang Yinghe rubbed its ears. He hesitated, but he really couldn't say its name. "Don't make a fuss at night."

Although the difference between night and day was very faint in the Nether Realm, Jiang Yinghe believed in its ability to distinguish the time of day. He set his mind at rest and retired to the soft bed within the pleasure boat. Removing his cloak, he soon drifted off to sleep.

It was very quiet. Even the living spirits in the lakebed were unusually silent. The little, white cat tilted its head and stared at him for a moment. Then, a little paw reached out to touch him. Only when he was sure that Shizun was asleep did Chang Ye withdraw his paw.

The candlelight cast the kitten's shadow onto the wall. Its shape gradually grew larger.

The being that was the size of a regular cat slowly relaxed the restraints of his appearance. After shedding just a few layers, he was already the size of a juvenile tiger. His entire body was covered with fuzzy fur, and his tail was deceptively soft. It was strong and long enough to wrap around a person's waist.

The originally little physical vessel expanded to reveal a fraction of the vicious beast within. Chang Ye carefully approached and settled down to watch his Shizun from the side. His fuzzy tail moved like it had a mind of its own to teasingly caress Jiang Yinghe's waist.

Chang Ye lifted a paw to wipe away the nonexistent drool from his mouth. His barbed tongue came out to lick at his paw as he stared with great restraint at this person.

His movement seemed to please Jiang Yinghe, who rolled over to bury himself in a mountain of fluff. He embraced the vicious beast beside him like a body pillow.

...It's hard sometimes to be born a devil.

Chang Ye was somewhat tense. His tongue snuck out again to lick the snow white rabbit ears on Jiang Yinghe's head.

The now wet rabbit ears trembled slightly.

Chang Ye stared at them. He's seen rabbit devils before, but none of them were like Shizun... The rod that he personally considered to be very thick stiffened as blood madly rushed downwards in his body. The appendage strained painfully against the thin layer of skin barely containing it.

...He had only himself to blame for this. But it was just so fragrant here...

Chang Ye swallowed. He felt Jiang Yinghe shift away from his fur and murmur, "Don't lick...sleep."

He even patted the soft fur beside him with closed eyes as he spoke. Jiang Yinghe only continued to sleep once he believed the little kitten had calmed down. He didn't notice anything wrong with the tail that had circled around him.

Jiang Yinghe's voice has always been pleasant to listen to. When he spoke in a half-dreaming state, it was almost enough to overcome what little remained of Chang Ye's self-control.

But he was more afraid of waking him in the end. He feared being rejected once again once his true identity was discovered.

Chang Ye pouted as he curled up around Shizun and buried himself into the other person's arms. His uncontrollable tail continued to swish around on its own.

Due to this, Jiang Yinghe had a dream that night.

He dreamt that he raised a kitten. The problem was that the kitten seemed to grow endlessly. Even when it was enormous, the kitten still licked him like it did when it was little.

...He was going to die if this went on.

If the barbs on its tongue weren't backwards, he would be half dead after a single lick. Jiang Yinghe couldn't say a thing to the kitten as every part of his body became inflamed from the contact. It was like they were in an intense battle.

It was so tiring.

When Jiang Yinghe woke up, he still couldn't make heads nor tails of his dream. He could deal with having no desires from being single for a thousand years and reacting slowly due to having no passion root, but why did his mind react so quickly to these kinds of things?

This shouldn't happen. He was an upright sprout with normal values, so why did he think that a kitten had indecent thoughts towards him?

Jiang Yinghe washed his undergarments as he corrected his way of thinking. He estimated how much longer it would take to reconnect the River Styx in his mind. Then he had to return to Peng Lai, or go to the devil tribes to look for Xiao Yun-shidi...

As he was changing, he caught sight of his own reflection in the mirror before him. The usually shy rabbit ears were drooping even more today.

He felt like he had turned into a floppy-eared rabbit overnight...

Wait...

He wasn't a rabbit to begin with, ah!

Jiang Yinghe incredulously stepped closer and brushed back the appendages on his head. The residual effects of the drug had already passed, so it was safe to touch.

The tips were a bit irritated...

The only other living thing on the boat was that kitten called Cuihua. Jiang Yinghe logically concluded that this little ancestor used the unremovable props on his head as cat toys while he slept.

He turned around to seriously scold the little cat before he saw how it was lifting its foot to lick at the area beneath. The kitten gave him a look before burying its head once again.

Hiss.

Backward barbs.

Jiang Yinghe's head was completely filled with thoughts like 'why does that pink and tender place look so ferocious after he noticed the barbs'. He felt like his mind that was once as clear as ice and as clean as jade had been thoroughly corrupted.

He looked away with a complicated expression. So the little kitten was a male.

Jiang Yinghe really was somewhat curious. Eventually, he succumbed to the temptation and shifted his gaze back. He walked over and patted the kitten on the head as he muttered to himself, "That hurts to even look at. No wonder you can't find a girlfriend..."

The white cat stiffened at a rate visible to the naked eye.

Author's Corner

San-er, you're about to flip tables.

Rain

Damn. Jiang Yinghe is such a savage lol.

Sahl

I second Rain. Very savage.

OceanofPDF.com

CH46 - LOSING HIS MIND AGAIN (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Tian Mo School

The Blood Pool boiled and frothed as countless bubbles rose to the surface. A red eyeball slowly floated upwards from the depths.

The blind girl in red kneeling to the side seemed to notice the Blood Shadow. She inclined her head towards it and listened for a while. "You don't know what to do either?"

She scooped up the Blood Shadow from the pond and placed the recently separated red eyeball on a snake body raised by the Tian Mo School. The eyeball gradually integrated with its new, twitching pitch-black body. It saw red as it spat out, "That thing is on a whole other level. We're both internal demons, so why does it deserve special treatment while I have to be threatened by Li Huanhan every day... He even cut me out of his body!"

The blind girl asked, "Isn't it good to have your own?"

"It's not bad," the Blood Shadow wavered and curled up in a coil, "but..."

As the two conversed, the pool suddenly again began to ripple and stir. A black-clothed figure emerged from within, spilling vividly red droplets everywhere.

One of Li Huanhan's hands gripped the ice-cold boundary of the bond. The handprint radiated a chilling aura. His eyes were tightly closed as he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. Overall, he seemed quite haggard.

"Master," asked the blind girl, "did the reabsorption of the internal demon fail again?"

The internal demon markings were still buried deeply within his heart, like vines that weaved through his blood vessels to constrict his entire body. They pulsed with a life of their own.

"En." Li Huanhan raised his eyes and wiped the remaining blood from his lips. He stood up, and all the moisture from his body vanished, like it had returned to the pool.

"Where is the Blood Shadow?" Li Huanhan turned to look at the red-eyed black snake. He ordered expressionlessly, "Look for Shizun's location again."

"Um, my lord, it won't change no matter how many times you ask. The Xianjun really is in the Nether Realm, ah." The black snake hissed exasperatedly, "But with your current condition, maybe it's better that you don't find him. What if he awakens your internal demons again..."

Li Huanhan gave him a warning glance. He chose to ignore the latter half of its words as he turned to the blind girl. "Jimie, any news on your end?"

The blind girl in red rose and took out two letters. One was Qin Jun's proposal for a ceasefire, and the other...was delivered by a devil."

Li Huanhan accepted the letters and glanced over the proposal. He casually tore it open only to be greeted with Qin Jun's illegible scrawl. He tossed it to the side before opening the other one.

Chang Ye's proper and dignified handwriting stated the following:

Li-shixiong,

It's been quite some time since our last meeting. Ye-er misses Shixiong a lot. Thinking about how Shixiong has been tormented by internal demons this whole time, your Shidi feels ecstatic deeply concerned for Shixiong.

But Ye-er has learned of Shizun's current location. If Shixiong is willing to fight Qin-shixiong above the River Styx, I'll slip that information to you.

He signed off as 'Your little shidi, Chang Ye' with a crisp pawprint at the end.

Li Huanhan's voice was cold, "Every one of Chang Ye's actions are calculated. He's up to no good again."

The blind girl understood his implication. "Master, will you still go then?"

The palace hall was quiet for some time. Then the sound of the letter being crumpled and a deep sigh followed.

"...Yes."

—-

Jiang Yinghe was pawed awake by a little kitten.

He was still half-asleep. He held its little paws and admonished it, "Don't be naughty. Good little devils need to get lots of sleep. Kittens that stay up all night can't get a good-looking human form..."

His soft voice stirred up Chang Ye's heart. The kitten wrapped itself in his hands and licked his fingertips. Just when the skin was becoming slightly irritated, there was a sudden and violent shaking outside the pleasure boat.

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes with urgency as he rushed out with a moon white coat. The sound of thunder resounded above the clouds, seemingly to the heavens.

Near the source of the thunder, two shadows collided. Their sword lights cut through the sky like a sharp blade, scattering the multitude of ghosts in shock. Many ghost cultivators surrounded the River Styx, quite eager to pounce. They were just waiting for their Patriarch to give the order.

But Qin Jun never gave the order. Instead, a furious shout came out from the clouds.

"Li Huanhan?! Did you come here to fucking die?!"

A silent and indifferent response came from back, "You're the one who will die."

One of them was born an evil wraith without a physical form, and the other could be revived countless times by the Blood Pool. No matter how many times they fought, the result would be the same. The only thing that would be obliterated was the surrounding environment.

From the moment Jiang Yinghe heard the words 'Li Huanhan', he became anxious. Although he knew there would be trouble if that person couldn't find him, he didn't expect it to come so soon.

He sighed and looked at the little cat beside him helplessly. "What did I do wrong to deserve them fighting here? If they like killing so much, why drag other people into their quarrels?"

He raised a hand to condense his sword. Wangchen soon manifested from his palm before violently flying into the clouds above.

In the next moment, the layer of clouds that were just trembling from the sound of swords and the abundant killing intent present suddenly became silent. Two figures emerged from the clouds and watched Jiang Yinghe from a distance.

The atmosphere abruptly became tense.

Qin Jun knew that this was Shizun's way of dissuading them from fighting. Despite his uncontrollable anger, he could only indignantly reach out and grasp Wangchen in the end.

Wangchen allowed itself to be held by Qin Jun, who then descended with it and returned it to Jiang Yinghe's hands.

"Shizun." Qin Jun frowned, "He's lost his mind again. He came here to pick a fight with me for no reason."

Jiang Yinghe received Wangchen and swished the blade once. He then held it in his palm and looked up at the approaching figure of Li Huanhan.

His eyes remained steady as he looked at Li Huanhan, "Just there is fine. Don't come over yet."

The other party's movement stiffened for a moment, but he still listened and stopped.

The wind was howling.

The little white cat behind Jiang Yinghe jumped up onto the tabletop and laid there like it was going to watch a show.

The corners of Li Huanhan's coat were blown back by the cold wind, revealing the scarlet lining within. His blood-red eyes gazed over in silence.

He had already noticed the absence of the sword pendant on Wangchen.

That sword pendant had been stained with his blood, as well as Shizun's. It had once been desired and cherished. It had also once protected his Shizun on his behalf. But now, everything had gone up in smoke.

He didn't know when his feelings for his Shizun had begun to change.

Li Huanhan's eyes were fixated on the other party. He watched as Jiang Yinghe took out that sword pendant from his spatial artifact. Its internal structure had been damaged, rendering it no different from any ordinary rock.

Just like their relationship.

Jiang Yinghe's heart was filled with mixed emotions, and he didn't know what to say. "It should have been treasured by me, but I have selfishly damaged it. Now I have no choice but to return it to its original owner."

The mirror stone floated into the air and slowly returned to Li Huanhan's hand.

"The person who should have treasured it was me." The blood in his chest swelled, and the lingering pain overwhelmed him once again. Like a string stretched beyond its breaking point, it snapped and pierced through his fingertips.

This would be the second time this stone was drenched in the blood from his heart. How fitting.

Jiang Yinghe lowered his eyes, as if he didn't really want to look at him. He felt as if his heart was also aching. Taking in a breath, he quietly sighed, "There is one more thing that you have the right to know about."

Qin Jun anticipated what he was going to say. He remembered that Chang Ye was still nearby, "Shizun..."

"I'm a person who can't reciprocate your feelings no matter what you do." Jiang Yinghe said, "My passion root had been severed, and I have a tribulation of love ahead of me. Either way, it's not worth it for you to continue being so stubborn."

He recounted his conversation with Zhangmen-shixiong from a few days ago with a calm demeanour. He didn't realize that, while Li Huanhan was startled, all of the fur of the kitten beside him stood on end.

The wind was howling.

It was quite a while before the other person replied.

Li Huanhan's voice was extremely hoarse, as if he was straining to repress something. Every one of his words were deep. "It's okay."

His desires that could never be fulfilled were like a whirlpool that forever trapped him. An inevitable and inescapable pit that would suffocate him one day.

But it was like Li Huanhan couldn't feel the danger he was in.

His start and end points were too low. It seemed like he really only had one goal — to make sure that Shizun stayed by his side.

In other words, Jiang Yinghe lacking his passion root was a good thing to him. It meant that he couldn't like Chang Ye. Besides, he doubted his ability to make Shizun love a person like him.

Jiang Yinghe wasn't the only person taken aback. Qin Jun and Chang Ye were also stunned.

Qin Jun was surprised that he had accepted it so quickl, and Chang Ye suffered two blows in quick succession.

How could there be someone like this? Li Huanhan was paranoia and caution blended into one. On one hand, he was willing to respect Jiang Yinghe's wishes and stand at a distance to talk to him. Yet he was also driven mad to the point of forcefully imprisoning him in a place where no one else could find him.

Li Huanhan didn't seem to feel anything was wrong. He continued, "Even if you had a passion root, you wouldn't fall for me. From this perspective, the heavens have been kind to me."

Qin Jun only heard half of his words before he exploded. "Have you considered Shizun's feelings for even a moment?"

"I have." Li Huanhan stared at Jiang Yinghe alone, "If Shizun is willing to take a chance, I won't stop him. I would even go with him. But if Shizun refrains because he values the world, I would be fine with it because I'm included in that group."

Qin Jun was speechless. He felt like what Li Huanhan's words were similar to his own, but the meaning was completely different. He was about to go mad dealing with this heavenly demon.

Just as Qin Jun lifted his sword to kill this nuisance of a heavenly demon, the person beside him prevented him from doing so. Shizun grasped his fingers and held them in his palm, giving him a slightly reassuring pat.

Jiang Yinghe looked at Li Huanhan and said, "After the River Styx is repaired, I will go to the demons to look for Xiao Yun-shidi. You can come

if you want to, but I must seal your cultivation. Just to prevent you from disrespecting your Shizun again."

"Alright," Li Huanhan didn't hesitate at all, "I will listen to Shizun."

He approached step by step from mid-air and landed on the bow of the ship. His calm and almost frozen gaze finally cracked at this moment.

Jiang Yinghe even felt that the other party didn't see him, but rather a lifesaving rope on the edge of a cliff.

Li Huanhan stretched out his hand and grasped this rope. Although he was seconds away from death, he was still afraid of hurting him.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand and touched the place where the internal demon patternings had spread to. The temperature beneath his fingers was boiling hot, like there was blood flowing inside.

"Huanhan," He sighed, "you hold on too tightly...to the sand between your fingers."

"My obsession is too deep." Li Huanhan's eyes were still focused. His appearance remained unchanged, and his tone was heavy, "I...wanted what I could not have, giving my internal demons control over me."

—-

Qin Jun never thought that he would be working with Li Huanhan to repair the River Styx one day.

His silver hair was down and only half-tied. His steel gray eyes revealed an extremely fierce air and the true nature of an evil wraith. He glared at Li Huanhan who was sitting nearby.

The heavenly demon in red on the other side dispassionately gazed back with his bloodshot eyes.

All of the sword energy at the point where the River Styx had been cut off had been removed, leaving only one last repair to be done. Qin Jun looked

at Li Huanhan again. He felt like this guy was sometimes a genius and sometimes just insane. Even more unpleasantly, Qin Jun had a hidden suspicion that Li Huanhan had affected him in some way.

"You came here to fight." Qin Jun licked his teeth. Unbridled aggression radiated from him. "You must be tired of living."

Li Huanhan lowered his eyes and indifferently tossed the letter from Chang Ye onto the table. His face was blank. "I was just beating him at his own game."

Qin Jun took the letter and glanced at the dignified handwriting. He snorted, "Chang Ye? He's just trying to use you to test the waters with Shizun for his own benefit."

"I know."

Li Huanhan's blood-red eyes were cold. "He's by Shizun's side?"

"He's that cat." Qin Jun's tone was dripping with disgust, "He only knows how to attract people with a cute face, but there's a crafty schemer beneath his facade."

For the first time, Li Huanhan agreed wholeheartedly with Qin Jun's words. He nodded his head slightly, "Indeed."

Qin Jun looked at him and the internal demon patterning that covered his body. He suddenly said, "Li Huanhan, don't you think that the two of us...are influencing each other?"

Li Huanhan was silent for a moment, "Somewhat."

"The desire to monopolize always comes first," Qin Jun raised his hands to cover half of his face as the miasma around his body stirred, "but...there are moments where my attitude becomes similar to yours."

The corners of Li Huanhan's mouth twitched. "Mind taking on some of my internal demons then?"

"...Not a chance in hell." Qin Jun's previous anger towards him had completely dissipated. He continued, "I had a suspicion before, but I never had the chance to confirm."

Li Huanhan looked up, "Tell me."

"How could such a coincidence be possible? Three Half-step Golden Immortals who fell to heavenly lightning reviving almost at the same time before all gathering by Shizun's side... They also happen to all be historically renowned evil cultivators too." Qin Jun pondered for a moment, "Doesn't it seem like this situation was purposely arranged?"

Li Huanhan looked over quietly with a trace of humor in his red eyes. "Are you trying to say that it was fate? Or are you trying to say that someone had a hand in this?"

Qin Jun smirked mockingly, "You believe in fate?"

Li Huanhan didn't answer immediately. After a moment of consideration, he answered calmly, "I don't."

"Although I think that people like Shizun easily attract evil cultivators with sinister intentions," Qin Jun spoke as if he was not an evil cultivator himself, "but it doesn't have to be that kind of attraction."

Li Huanhan remained silent.

"When I was at Sword Saint Taichu's old residence, my identity was only exposed when protecting Shizun from the sword energy of a Half-step Golden Immortal the Kanmi Mirror revealed... But that sword energy was fake. Only the Kanmi Mirror was real." Qin Jun said, "Sword Saint Taichu was a sword cultivator from an era before even Chang Ye was born. Before we entered his old residence, Shizun recited the incantation to unlock the main entrance."

"I know what you're trying to say." Li Huanhan said indifferently, "You mean that Sword Saint Taichu had anticipated us interacting with his future incarnation before disappearing, so he made preparations in advance?"

As soon as he finished speaking, Li Huanhan leaned forward. His words were filled with a chilling air: "Qin Jun, if you suspect, even for a moment, that you might not be absolutely sincere, I suggest that you should withdraw. Don't get in my way."

Qin Jun met his eyes straight on. He even shot Li Huanhan a cocky smirk.

"I should be the one saying that. If you let go of your obsessions, your internal demons would immediately resolve themselves."

The situation became a stalemate once again. Neither was willing to give an inch.

Regardless of whether or not their Shizun was truly the reincarnation of Sword Saint Taichu, the two of them could clearly recognize that their feelings towards him were their own. A third party might have caused them to revive at Shizun's side, but their infatuation was genuine.

A successful reincarnation required a catalyst to awaken the memories of the reincarnated individual. But it has been far too long. To find someone from Sword Saint Taichu's era to be the catalyst would be like searching for needles in a haystack.

The palace was silent for a long time. Then Li Huanhan's voice rang out quietly.

"His passion root..."

"Tsk." Qin Jun hooked up his lower lip, "Didn't you accept it quite well before? You even looked so willing."

Li Huanhan raised his eyes to glare at him darkly, "Did you really think that Shizun would make us wait for a love calamity that might never come?"

He wasn't that kind of person. Qin Jun knew that in his heart.

But Zhou Zhengping's words did make sense.

He was somewhat...afraid as well.

The two knew exactly what they were afraid of. There was no need to elaborate between them. They were reluctant to say more to each other.

"If Shizun really wants to retrieve it, I naturally have nothing to say." Qin Jun said, "We'll kill Huntun, take back his passion root and...end things once and for all?"

The last two words were light and almost sacrificial in nature. But Li Huanhan could commiserate with Qin Jun's reluctance in his heart.

He would only choose one person.

It didn't have to be him.

Li Huanhan closed his eyes and sighed heavily, "What about Chang Ye?"

"He's still considering the right time to confess," Qin Jun glanced outside the palace, "but there's no need. Tonight is good."

He felt the other party's blood-red eyes land in him. He raised his lips in a careless smile, "Shizun asked me if I had any live fish to feed to that cat, so I gave him some that were laced with dispelling pills."

Li Huanhan raised an eyebrow. "What if he loses control of his size? Tianhou's original body is large enough to clog the River Styx."

"It doesn't matter." Qin Jun tapped on the table occasionally, "Wouldn't it be fun to force him to show his true self for once? It's about time our little Shidi got a taste of his own medicine."

Author's Corner

San-er, you're not going to enjoy what comes next.

OceanofPDF.com

CH47 - REAPING WHAT YOU SOW (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe felt a little hot.

It was as though he were being hugged by a fluffy doll. Something soft touched his cheeks and then slipped in beside his neck like a feather.

Everything was starting to come together and fall into place, but his dreams for the last few days have been very strange. It was like there was a threatening beast around him, just lying in wait.

Jiang Yinghe was a bit agitated, but he still didn't want to wake up – the same thing happened before after all. No matter how many times he woke up, the only thing he faced was a small white cat with a big, fluffy tail.

You couldn't get angry with it, but it still made you feel uncomfortable.

He closed his eyes and burrowed deeper. That soft tail tentatively came over again, teasing him like a cute kitten's affectionate cuddle.

He reached out and held the tail in his hand. His voice was sleepy as he whispered in a hushed tone, "Why are you acting up? Stop it or you're not allowed on the bed anymore."

His words worked for only a moment. Then the small tongue with soft barbs began to gently lick at his jaw again. After a while, the area became irritated and Jiang Yinghe was finally woken up by the small cat.

Was Cuihua actually such a boisterous little kitten? Jiang Yinghe grasped his little paw, but something was wrong with the size. When he opened his eyes, he saw an abnormally large kitten...

This wasn't a cute little cat anymore... Jiang Yinghe looked at this cat that was the size of a tiger. For a moment, he started to question what his life had come to. He sat up silently while looking at Cuihua. He struggled to find the words. "You're...actually a tiger demon? Or some other beast?"

As their owner's mood changed, even the long ears that had been working hard to minimize their presence curled up softly. They just about tangled up with each other.

Cuihua seemed a bit dazed as well. It looked down at itself, then did its best to play dumb as it innocently approached and circled around Jiang Yinghe, like it had just awakened its bloodline.

"...Wait a minute, wu..."

The big fluffy cat wrapped around him. Jiang Yinghe pressed down on its shoulder to try and break free, but that fluffy tail hooked around his waist. He couldn't even retreat.

Its barbed tongue licked at his collarbone through a thin layer of clothes. There was a slightly painful sensation as the tip of the wet tongue brushed across his neck.

"You're already a big cat now. Don't act so spoiled... Stop licking, it hurts."

Jiang Yinghe didn't expect that the kitten he had taken in turned out to be a beast of unknown origin. He frowned as he stopped it while peeling away his thin and wet shirt.

The candlelight illuminated a section of skin that was the colour of frost and a delicate collarbone that was irritated from the barbs. The marks resembled a fierce trail of kisses left during a lover's passionate embrace.

Jiang Yinghe was completely unaware of how provocative the marks were. To him, they were nothing more than a sheltered little demon's dependence and affection for him.

"Since you're not a cat," Jiang Yinghe retied his clothes and looked up, "when this is over, I'll send you to Wanyao City, back to where you should be..."

Before he could finish his words, he saw a pair of eyes that glowed like luminous lamps. It was like two light bulbs of extraordinary wattage that dazzled the eyes. Jiang Yinghe was only momentarily distracted, but it was enough for this big cat to pounce and firmly press him down!

He was drowning in a sea of hair, and at a loss for words.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to reprimand it when a broad, hot tongue licked his sensitive waist. The sensation made his entire body soften. Even his tendons had gone numb.

"...Hiss. Little beast, what are you doing?"

He adopted him, fed him, and was going to send him back to his hometown. Where else would you find such a good deal? How could a devil that was already sentient lack even a shred of human appreciation?

Jiang Yinghe didn't notice that his body had become somewhat inflamed. As he pulled on the big cat's ears to discipline him, his leg bumped into something barbed when it lifted.

His mind went blank for a moment and his body stiffened a bit.

...Demon beasts all have a rutting period. I can't believe I thought he was pitiful before!

He needs to be neutered. It isn't up for debate anymore.

Jiang Yinghe was so angry that his face became flushed. He lifted his foot to kick the cat away. But when he stared into those innocent eyes that were reminiscent of moonlight, he didn't know where to start.

This respite allowed him to clear his mind. While Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath and thought about how to sterilize someone in the cultivation world, he noticed the 'newly awakened devil' was still growing in size.

The River Styx was very buoyant. It should be very difficult to sink a ship, but right now the pleasure boat was swaying like a lotus leaf being blown around in the middle of a storm.

The cat called 'Cuihua' in front of him finally revealed its true form.

The pleasure boat cracked and broke into pieces. The water of the River Styx poured into the boat. but the liquid was swatted away by a giant claw. Before Jiang Yinghe could react, a soft paw supported him.

He saw wings that were large enough to eclipse the sun and sky sprout from the devil beast's back. Its surging devilish aura roused all the living souls in the River Styx. The Nether World that didn't distinguish between day and night was completely blocked out by its form, plunging everything into a long-absent darkness.

And within the darkness, the beast's eyes grew narrower. They were no longer the round black eyes of a small white cat. Now they radiated the terrifying aura of an apex predator.

It placed Jiang Yinghe on the shoreline. Then the towering form of the beast disappeared in an instant to be replaced by the figure of a boy in red.

In his original form, Tianhou's body was large enough to span the River Styx. But as a human, the river water could soak him through even if he stood in the shallows.

Chang Ye stood in front of Jiang Yinghe. His long dark hair was loose and dripping. His red robes were soaked as well, the water making the material darken into the shade of clotting blood.

Chang Ye was still wearing his half mask, but it was a wet mess. The other half of his face was not much better off. Water droplets fell from his eyelashes and landed on his cheeks.

The seal that Jiang Yinghe had laid down to protect him when they first met was still glittering on his forehead.

Wearing only a white shirt, Jiang Yinghe was unkempt as well. His face remained unreadable as he gazed at Chang Ye before him.

He heard his little disciple haltingly call out, "Shizun..."

Jiang Yinghe didn't respond, but he stepped closer and took out a snow white handkerchief from his spacial artifact. He leaned down to dry the water marks on Chang Ye's face.

Chang Ye felt an ember of hope rekindle in his chest. His voice was filled with yearning, "Shizun, Ye-er... Ye-er just missed you so, so much. I was afraid that you didn't want me anymore."

Jiang Yinghe's expression didn't change, nor did he say anything. He quietly finished wiping the water droplets off his youngest disciple's face and spoke in an indifferent tone, "I've always thought Ye-er was the most innocent and pure one. It turns out that your lies ran the deepest all these years—and nothing has changed now."

Chang Ye looked at him in a daze. He subconsciously grasped Jiang Yinghe's hand tightly. "Shizun, I was wrong. Let me explain, alright? I didn't really mean to lie to you... I was actually, actually trying to protect you! Those other two both had evil intentions..."

Jiang Yinghe looked at him coolly. He even came an inch closer and asked in a faint tone, "Then what about you?"

Chang Ye's justifications abruptly halted.

Jiang Yinghe's statement was like striking ice with a piece of jade. The resulting sound was crisp and seemed to touch the soul of anyone who heard it. But his tone was so distant that it caused Chang Ye's heart to squeeze in anguish.

"You never had second thoughts about what you did." Jiang Yinghe pressed against the tip of his nose. His inky eyes were clear as he calmly, and even gently, asked, "Isn't that so?"

Their breaths slowly intermingled.

This was clearly something that Chang Ye had long since dreamed of, but he only felt an indescribable panic right now.

It was like he would lose this person if he lied one more time.

There was a pulsating ache in Chang Ye's throat, as if a blade was viciously cutting into the area making blood gush out. His Adam's apple moved slightly, as he confessed arduously, "...No, that's not it. Actually, I was also..."

He paused for a second, and then continued with great difficulty, "I... I also like Shizun. I want to bring you back to Wanyao City, to be my...my..."

Jiang Yinghe's slanted eyes were in front of him. His eyelashes were slender and straight, casting a faint shadow onto the skin beneath.

Even with Chang Ye's ability to read others, he was unable to discern if Jiang Yinghe was angry or not. But his intuition was going off like an alarm. He couldn't even utter another superfluous plea in his defence.

He watched as the other's frost-white fingertips touched his brow.

Chang Ye clenched his fingers and called out nervously and urgently, "...Shizun..."

Jiang Yinghe finally turned his gaze to look quietly and silently into his eyes. His tone was calm, "Chang Ye, who killed those two He Huan sect disciples during our visit?"

"...It was me."

"Were the wind tribe devils that attacked us on the way to the Sword Conference related to you?"

"...Yes."

Chang Ye's voice has always been pleasant to listen to. His words have never been as stiff and heavy as they were now.

"You intentionally planned out the route to Wanyao City. If Li Huanhan hadn't arrived, you could've controlled all the information and people I was exposed to, right?"

"..."

His youngest disciple didn't say anything.

But his silence was all the more damning.

Jiang Yinghe slowly closed his eyes and sighed deeply. He suddenly realized that his ignorance from before was not only due to Chang Ye's web of lies and cover-ups, but also his own gullibility and wishful thinking.

When it came to someone he trusted, Jiang Yinghe was reluctant to listen to others' dissenting opinions of that person. Many individuals had hinted to him before that these disciples were hiding their true selves, but he chose to trust in their shared history instead.

It turned out that every moment they spent together was just another part of an elaborate plot.

"When I met you on the Frozen Plains," Jiang Yinghe slowly said, "was that also a part of your plan?"

"No."

Chang Ye cut off his words and flung himself into the other person's arms. He buried himself into Jiang Yinghe's shoulder as his voice cracked with hidden emotions. "It's not like that. When I first met Shizun...I just wanted to repay you..."

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand and patted him gently on the back before leaving his embrace. He gazed at Chang Ye and stated, "This is your

repayment."

His hand reached out once again with zero hesitation. Jiang Yinghe took back the seal that had been protecting Chang Ye. The silver mark before him dimmed little by little before fading away without leaving a trace.

The River Styx behind him surged up. The quiet weeping of the living souls within could be heard.

Jiang Yinghe turned away. Even the wind in the Nether Realm gave off a ghostly chill. He glanced at the wet ends of Chang Ye's hair. "Devil King Tianhou turned out to be one of my disciples. Peng Lai hasn't had such an honour since the creation of the sect."

Chang Ye half-knelt in front of him, his voice slightly hoarse, "...Shizun."

"Don't call me that anymore." Jiang Yinghe wearily pinched his eyebrows as he spoke, "I'd like to ask Your Highness about where you sent my Xiao Yun-shidi. Also, when were you planning on taking off these two decorations you deceived me into wearing?"

"I've already had my men release Xiao Yun-shishu. He...he should be back at Peng Lai." Chang Ye grabbed the hem of his dangling sleeve and looked up with shimmering tears in his eyes, "Shi-Shizun, I was wrong. I'll take them off right now. Please don't throw me away..."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a pull. "Get up."

It was only when Chang Ye stood up properly that Jiang Yinghe realized how wet his clothes were. But his disheveled state didn't detract from his excessive 360 degree beauty.

Jiang Yinghe even felt like sometimes that face was what misled him.

Chang Ye looked at him with tears in his eyes. He was so pitiful that the tip of his nose had turned red. He made a hand seal before slowly removing the rabbit ears from Jiang Yinghe's hair. While wiping at his tears, he hoarsely

said, "I don't know why Yun-shishu didn't go back either. Ye-er is still young, so won't Shizun forgive me..."

Jiang Yinghe glanced at him. "You're young?"

Those overly sensitive ears were slowly removed. It was only now that Jiang Yinghe realized that Chang Ye was actually a little taller than he was. He just had to look up slightly to see that handsome and extraordinarily beautiful face. The other person had tears in his eyes at the moment. He seemed like a pitiful, homeless kitten.

But he wasn't a cat. He was an ancient archdevil.

Jiang Yinghe watched him finish taking off the rabbit ears. He was about to say something else when Chang Ye suddenly pounced on him. A foreign breath suddenly approached.

In the next instant, soft lips touched his own. What was originally just a stolen kiss spiralled out of control. Chang Ye tightly gripped his waist, like an unruly child that only knew how to throw tantrums. He was crying while kissing him forcefully.

Jiang Yinghe struggled but couldn't get away. He was kissed by this little beast until he had no strength. He had no choice but to slap him to break free from his grasp.

He didn't hold back his strength in the slightest. Chang Ye's indescribably beautiful face was marred by a handprint. The corner of his lips were cut by his teeth. A trickle of blood began to flow from the wound.

He raised his hand and wiped the blood from the corner of his lip. His voice was very quiet, "...Shizun...I, I can't help it. As soon as I get close to you, my instincts as a devil take over. I can't restrain it...or endure it. I don't know what I might do if you leave me."

Jiang Yinghe touched his lips. His brows gently knitted. "You've already heard that I lack a passion root, so why..."

"I don't care." Chang Ye looked up sharply, his eyes fixed on Jiang Yinghe's. "As long as you don't leave me, Ye-er can accept anything..."

His voice suddenly cut off.

Jiang Yinghe followed Chang Ye's gaze and saw Li Huanhan and Qin Jun standing not far behind him.

Then, a cloak that was still warm fell on his shoulders. It belonged to Li Huanhan.

"Little Shidi." Qin Jun smiled at Chang Ye, "Crying suits you much better than smiling."

He paused and added insult to injury, "It's true that Yun-shishu didn't return to Peng Lai. So where in the world did your subordinate take him, hmm?"

Author's Corner

Every knife inflicts a fatal wound.

OceanofPDF.com

CH48 - A PIECE OF THE ACTION (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Chang Ye raised a hand to wipe at his damp hair, his pupils widened into an almost feral, animalistic shape.

He had never shown such an expression before.

He was originally a ferocious beast disguised as a kitten, full of terrifying savagery and danger masked under his overly beautiful face.

"Qin Jun." Chang Ye narrowed his eyes, "What Shizun and I spoke about has nothing to do with you. Get lost."

Qin Jun didn't have the slightest intention of leaving. He quirked his lips up as he looked at Chang Ye.

"Little Shidi, your tail's puffed up."

There was still a tail behind Chang Ye that hadn't been retracted. Not only that, his ears and canines were gradually appearing.

Chang Ye no longer paid attention to Qin Jun. When he turned his gaze to Jiang Yinghe, his voice suddenly softened, "I'll accompany Shizun to the devil tribes to find Yun-shishu. Shizun...what must I do for you to forgive Ye-er?"

Li Huanhan's pitch black cloak settled around Jiang Yinghe's shoulders. Only its edges had blood red patterns embroidered on it, just like the man

himself. The metallic scent of fresh blood wafted out from the deepest folds.

Jiang Yinghe stretched out his hand to gather the collar. He gave Chang Ye a deep glance as he spoke in a somewhat weary tone, "Forgive you? ...I never had the strength to blame you in the first place."

He turned away from the banks of the River Styx. A dark cloak surrounded a handful of snow-like, pure white. Whether it was his shoulders, his waist, or the slender line of his back as he walked away, the youth's hands had caressed it all.

Chang Ye watched him leave, then closed his eyes and inhaled deeply. His serrated and beastly teeth, peeking between his lips, gave out a bloodthirsty warning as he revealed his truest side.

Qin Jun stood at a distance. A deep and slightly cold laugh erupted from his throat.

"Did you think that everyone was a pawn on your chessboard?"

Chang Ye didn't speak, but his gloomy and fevered eyes shifted over.

Qin Jun squeezed his own hand and said carelessly, "You know Shizun's passion root is gone and that he only cares for the good of mankind, but did you consider the root of the problem?"

He paused for a moment.

"Since you betrayed Hundun, you should've ended him in one strike. Then there wouldn't be so much trouble afterwards." Qin Jun turned around and looked at the River Styx where the living souls surged. "It would also save many people the need to rack their brains over a half-dead feral beast."

Chang Ye clenched his teeth, "Of course I'll kill him."

"Easy for you to say." Qin Jun abruptly recalled some of what Zhou Zhengping had said to him that day, "When you fought him, how many died within the devil race?"

"..."

"What about the humans?"

"...I don't know." Chang Ye was a bit frustrated, "You want me to remember the lives of insects?"

Qin Jun looked at him with a considering gaze for a moment. Then he suddenly laughed sarcastically.

"Two hundred years ago, if Shizun hadn't taken pity on an 'insect' like you, you wouldn't be here now."

He licked his lips.

"Little Shidi, Chang Ye," Qin Jun rarely referred to him this way, "Suddenly, I'm starting to pity you."

—-

Meanwhile, in Youming Palace...

The main palace wasn't difficult to enter. It seemed like the Golden Boy and the Jade Girl were on guard duty today. The two children were napping outside, each more sleepy than the other. They had snuggled together to rest.

When Jiang Yinghe arrived, the Jade Girl raised her head to take a look. When she saw that it was the great beauty, she drifted back to dreamland without another word.

Jiang Yinghe sat on a chair and lowered his head as he untied the laces of the cloak. His eyes were downcast and somewhat vulnerable.

A hand pressed against his fingers.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his head to meet a pair of vividly red eyes. In the dim light, Li Huanhan's scent was both familiar and not. He radiated a faint chill, like a blade being unsheathed, yet...he also radiated warmth.

He had always been contradictory like this. Even though the difference was minute, Jiang Yinghe was able to tell whether Li Huanhan was under the influence of his internal demons.

When they were at the Tian Mo school in the past, although his attitude was still gentle, there was always an unsettling quality about him. It was as if the other party was a slowly surging stream of magma that could erupt and cause unimaginable destruction at any time.

Jiang Yinghe's entire body relaxed as he let out a very heavy sigh. He leaned forward somewhat weakly to rest his forehead on his disciple's shoulder.

His hand was held in Li Huanhan's fingers.

"No need to give it back to me." The voice in his ear was quiet and calm, "It's been a long time since I've been...so close to you."

Jiang Yinghe was speechless. He choked for a moment before whispering, "Why did you two come here?"

Li Huanhan didn't reply, instead wrapping his arms around Jiang Yinghe's shoulders. His palm slowly slid through the other party's loose and inky hair.

He could smell that familiar cold fragrance that was light and distant, like the smell of plum blossoms with a hint of the sweetness of pine.

After a long silence, Jiang Yinghe closed his eyes and asked again.

"Ye-er isn't someone who would suddenly lose control. Are you two behind this?"

"En."

The Nether Realm was really too dim. The only light sources inside were the phosphorous braziers lit on either side of the main hall. Their cold blue light clearly illuminated the hand of the man in his arms.

Beneath the skin, there were slender bones and veins. The vague movements of his meridians could be seen as he moved.

Jiang Yinghe returned Li Huanhan's grip.

His fingers were a little chilly due to dipping into the water of the River Styx earlier.

"You weren't so easy to talk to at the Tian Mo School."

Jiang Yinghe lifted his head. His tone had thawed a bit, "Chains and a small black room? Where did you learn that from? Who misled even my most obedient disciple?"

The other party's dark and slightly bloodshot eyes peered over.

"Is Shizun still angry?"

Jiang Yinghe looked down and sighed, "What should I be angry about? My only redeeming quality is not holding grudges."

"That's not true."

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes as he felt the other party's grip on his fingers tighten. He even spoke a little faster.

"That can't be true. Shizun has many redeeming qualities and strengths."

Jiang Yinghe found his disciple's uncharacteristic nervousness a bit cute. He was in a much better mood now as he continued to ask, "What else is there...? Am I good-looking?"

Li Huanhan suddenly paused.

The phosphorescent fire cast a ghostly shadow over those bloodshot eyes. Jiang Yinghe felt as if he was startled, but that feeling was fleeting.

The weak rays of light revealed the scattered strands of his inky black hair over his thin clothes. Li Huanhan's cloak was even resting over his

shoulders. His eyes were like stars, his lips were thin and softly outlined, but a very faint chill could be felt from them. At the edge of his collarbone, a patch of skin that was still irritated from being licked was partially visible, like a drop of red cinnabar fallen on a white declaration.

The colder a person appeared to be, the more alluring they became when ravished.

That pair of bloodshot eyes hastily looked away.

Then he heard the quiet, soft voice of his eldest disciple.

"...Shizun is very good-looking."

It was an ordinary sentence, but it made his pulse race—

Jiang Yinghe felt his heart skip a beat, as if something had cut off abruptly. He pressed a hand to his chest and frowned slightly.

"What's wrong?" Li Huanhan asked, "Are you uncomfortable there?"

His hand covered the back of Jiang Yinghe's hand.

Jiang Yinghe drew back his fingers and shook his head, "I'm fine, but you on the other hand... If you could always be the way you are now, I wouldn't have to seal your cultivation to travel together. Internal demons and obsessions are extremely complicated and hard to manage."

Li Huanhan remained silent for a moment. "...I've also thought of many solutions. I'm trying to control it right now."

"...Control?"

"Yes." Li Huanhan said, "I just started. If I gave them free reign...I might hurt you. It also needs to be released at suitable times, or else it would easily escape my control."

Jiang Yinghe thought for a moment and asked, "What kind of 'hurt' are we talking about?"

Li Huanhan didn't answer immediately. He hesitated for a moment before saying quietly, "A wound on your...body."

Jiang Yinghe's mind couldn't keep up. Li Huanhan didn't even do anything to him at the Tian Mo school, so why was he worse off now? He subconsciously followed up, "Be more specific."

If it wasn't too serious, then he could avoid sealing Hunahan's cultivation. After all, the other two were each as vicious and bloodthirsty as the other. The only thing that could keep one in check were the others. A triangle was the most stable way to...get along.

Li Huanhan looked up and whispered, "Do you want to try it?"

"...What?"

"Try it out...and see how it is for yourself."

For some reason, warning bells began going off in Jiang Yinghe's head. When he was about to refuse, a dark sheen clouded Li Huanhan's eyes as his previous warmth drained away.

That feeling appeared again.

It was like he could be bitten at any moment.

Jiang Yinghe was slightly nervous. Before he could say something to diffuse the situation, he was kissed.

His lips were already a little red. He couldn't struggle free just now at the River Styx, and things were no different at Youming Palace.

Jiang Yinghe was bitten by him hard enough to draw some blood. Then, the other party gently and possessively lapped at his lips.

He shoved at Li Huanhan's shoulders as his other hand touched his wounded lip. Just when he thought that this bit of pain was nothing, he felt his belt loosen.

...There was now a bigger problem.

His refusal was too slow.

Jiang Yinghe didn't even know how Li Huanhan had undone his belt. His cloak was still perfectly attached, but the thin, snow-white layer within had been pulled back.

Although nothing had been done yet, the contrast of the dark cloak against his complexion exuded a special appeal.

Jiang Yinghe felt his disciple's hand slide into his inner clothes, down the line of his belly...

Then, he felt him fiddling with that ring.

Ordinarily, he should have kicked this internal demon possessed evil cultivator away long before, but he faltered at the critical moment.

It would definitely hurt himself.

Jiang Yinghe breathed in slowly and deeply. He should be kinder to his own body... Even if it was a small wound, you had to consider the place, ah.

The demonic marking on the silver ring made from special materials slowly began to glow as Li Huanhan's fingers fondled it and the sturdy length it encircled.

"You!" Jiang Yinghe grasped his hand, "Take it off."

Li Huanhan was silent. Then he actually said, "Alright."

...Why was he agreeing so easily?

While Jiang Yinghe was still a little confused, he suddenly felt the inner side of the silver ring warm up. He shifted his legs apprehensively, his thighs tensing. "What are you doing...?"

"I'm taking it off, like Shizun requested."

Huanhan's eyes remained completely unchanged as he said this. If Jiang Yinghe couldn't hear his breathing gradually devolving into pants, he would've thought that this person was devoid of desire.

But the evidence was in. Not only was he deeply lustful, he was also peerlessly bold and reckless.

That silver ring loosened little by little, heating up wherever it made contact. Jiang Yinghe was being held intimately by his disciple's slim, yet powerful fingers, so the only fabric he could hold onto was the other's bright red, embroidered lapels.

"Is this the only way to...to take it off?" Jiang Yinghe wanted to cry a little. It wasn't that it hurt, but the sensation really was too strange and chaotic. It was even more dizzying than the time when he was hidden away and the ring was put on.

Besides, this was still Jun-er's main palace, and the other party might arrive at any moment. But he was in such a disheveled and somewhat sensually debauched state...

Jiang Yinghe grabbed Huanhan's lapels somewhat anxiously. His breathing was now a bit disordered too. "Why is it so...so strange...?"

He was kissed again before he could finish.

"It was Shizun who wanted to take it off." Those bloodshot eyes glowed with a phantom light from within, "If you can't endure it, we can stop and put it back, okay?"

...Who agreed to putting it back?

Jiang Yinghe clenched his teeth and closed his eyes. "Keep, keep going."

He thought this guy was gentle and obedient before. How did he become like this at the flip of a switch... Internal demon? More like a little yellow book adaptation device. As soon as this thing was touched and loosened, it started doing all kinds of... nonsensical things.

It wasn't just hot down there, his entire body felt odd. Jiang Yinghe looped his arms around Li Huanhan's neck and held on while he panted and tried not to move. It was only when the silver ring was completely removed that he breathed a long sigh of relief.

Just as he was busy feeling relieved, he suddenly heard a calm voice rumbling in his ear.

"Shizun, do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?"

"No, I..."

He was interrupted.

"More specifically, is...is there anywhere you feel...needs comforting?"

Jiang Yinghe: "...?"

"That place behind." Li Huanhan said, "How does it feel?"

Jiang Yinghe was somewhat shocked at how casually he asked while also being dumbfounded by the question. He froze for a moment before asking. "What...am I supposed to be feeling there?"

Li Huanhan looked up at him and raised his hand to show the silver ring between his fingers to Jiang Yinghe. The demonic pattern on it glowed intermittently.

He was completely serious as he calmly said, "Desire for satisfaction."

Jiang Yinghe blinked, then flushed. "...Are you joking?"

"No." Li Huanhan hugged him, "When Shizun said that he was clear-hearted and devoid of desire, I told you that would be a problem."

Jiang Yinghe didn't know when this internal demon would retreat, but he already believed his words.

Because he had indeed...felt it. The place at the base of his spine was sensitive, itching slightly as though...it needed something.

"The injury I was talking about," Li Huanhan lowered his head and gently touched his flushed earlobe with his lips, "was this. Your waist might be sore. Also..."

Jiang Yinghe was kissed from his ear to his neck by his wicked disciple. Then he felt Li Huanhan's slightly cool fingers slide down his spine to ease into the crevice between the rounded cheeks..."

"It will hurt here."

Li Huanhan looked at him, "But not to worry. I've kept the medicine that that devil shopkeeper gifted Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe held in his surging emotions for a while before shouting, "Who told you to keep that kind of stuff?!"

He was somewhat furious, but he was held so tightly that he didn't even have the strength to summon Wangchen. Therefore, he could only lower his head and bite the other man viciously on the shoulder.

Li Huanhan didn't seem to notice as he quietly watched him.

Instead, it was Jiang Yinghe who was poked by his finger. He made a muffled grunt as a dawning realisation came to him–

The ointment the deer devil shopkeeper gave him didn't mostly contain chrysanthemums as an ingredient...

It was for chrysanthemums—specifically the one at the base of his spine!

The corners of Jiang Yinghe's eyes reddened as the taste of Li Huanhan's blood flooded his mouth. He lowered his head when he loosened his mouth, his voice hoarse as he said, "I'll do it myself."

"You can't easily reach it."

"I can too." Jiang Yinghe was incensed, "It's not that deep..."

His voice stopped abruptly, and even if he didn't look, he could feel Li Huanhan's gaze cover him.

"Not...that deep?"

His tone was the same as ever. If he wasn't speaking of this kind of thing, he might've been mistaken for just a respectful and filial disciple. This man's internal demons were distinctly different from him. Only their calm and gentle restraint was exactly the same.

"...So the place where Shizun feels discomfort is very shallow?"

Jiang Yinghe's ears were completely red. He pushed the other man away with all his might, but before he could say anything else, another person's voice rang out from the palace doors.

"Li Huanhan." Qin Jun looked over with his grey eyes from a short distance away. His tone didn't betray his emotions, "I won't talk about the other things, but your ability to take advantage of weaknesses is indeed something special. You're quite skilled at 'eating alone'."

Li Huanhan's eyes suddenly darkened. He retied the clothing that he just half pulled off his Shizun without changing his expression. He only picked up the bonelessly tired person beside him protectively when his ankles were the only thing left uncovered.

"Eating alone? Are you trying to tell me," his tone was icy, "that you want a piece of the action?"

Author's Corner

HeHe: What do you mean 'a piece of the action'!? Can't you two behave like humans?!

Qin Jun: ...I didn't say anything like that.....

Li Huanhan: I'm not human.

Rain

Huanhan, you'll have to learn to share eventually...

Sahl

I'd like to note here that with the lovely Rain's permission, I've added a little extra spice to chapters (irl I write romance) I've edited. Mostly because we agree this was the author's intention, but censorship is a thing that exists. I've stayed as strictly as I can within what I believe the author intends and would have done if she could have. 😏 I hope you guys don't mind.

OceanofPDF.com

CH49 - A NOBLE AND GREAT PROFESSION (Draft)

Thank you to FrostyMoka, Mo and an anonymous reader for the Ko-fis!

Editor: Sahloknir

Qin Jun's footsteps approached.

The closer he got, the more he could sense Jiang Yinghe's slightly turbulent breathing. He glanced at Li Huanhan, looking into eyes that were like stagnant pools of congealed blood.

"This is why Shizun is wary of you." Qin Jun said, "Since there's something wrong with your brain, you should've stayed away from him. Can't you learn from your mistakes?"

The palace was silent. Only the sound of words spread out.

Li Huanhan gave him a chilled look filled with indifference. The dark red in his eyes became even darker. As the atmosphere thickened with tension to an almost suffocating degree, the person in his arms pulled at his collar. His voice was slightly raspy.

"Huanhan..."

Li Huanhan was not the only one who returned his gaze to Jiang Yinghe's body. They heard him inhale deeply. There were still notes of discomfort in his words.

"...I'll do it myself."

Jiang Yinghe slightly loosened his hand, not noticing that his hand had left the other party's collar damp. He tilted his head and took another slow breath. "Let me do it myself. You two...should both stay away from me."

Li Huanhan remained silent for a moment. Just when Qin Jun thought he would act unreasonably, he saw him tidy Jiang Yinghe's hair and wipe at his slightly sweaty forehead. Then Li Huanhan lowered his head, as if to kiss him, but he paused midway after seeing those furrowed dark eyebrows.

Qin Jun's tightly clenched hands loosened a bit. He didn't realize how tense he was just now. He could distinctly identify the emotions that suddenly burned inside of him – desire, jealousy and the desperate need to steal Shizun back to his side.

But he could also distinctly identify why he restrained himself. The corners of Jiang Yinghe's eyes were red from the torment, and his voice was a bit shaky, but he was able to clearly express his rejection of the two of them.

If he was planning on taking advantage of him in a moment of weakness, Qin Jun would've made a move much earlier. He wouldn't have held back until today.

Qin Jun let out a breath and stepped forward. He extended a hand towards Li Huanhan. "Give him to me. I'll take Shizun to the bedchamber."

Li Huanhan's blood red eyes cut into him from below. He didn't move.

Qin Jun raised his eyebrows. He clamped down on his rage with an iron fist as he twisted his fingers. "Or maybe I should try and correct that malfunctioning head of yours instead so you don't slip up at the most crucial moments."

Li Huanhan held Jiang Yinghe very carefully, but he was also the most aware of his Shizun's current situation. He scrutinized Qin Jun. "Where is it? I'll carry him there."

Youming Palace was just the main hall. Qin Jun had to lead the way to the bedchambers in the back. Qin Jun narrowed his eyes and glared at him, but

he relented in the end. He didn't forcibly take the person from Li Huanhan's arms again.

The two of them walked through Youming Palace without saying a word. They could hear Jiang Yinghe trying and failing to suppress his quiet moans and pants the entire time. In a way, this could be considered a form of torture.

Jiang Yinghe had been to these bedchambers before, but many new talismans and barriers seemed to have been added. There was a gauze canopy hanging above the very large bed, with several layers of pale gray curtains the colour of smoke surrounding it.

Li Huanhan placed him on the bed, but his fingers continued to comb through the other party's hair. He asked beside his ear, "Do you need a jade dildo?"

After all, Shizun might not be in the right state of mind to take care of it himself. Letting things go on for too long would only cause more discomfort.

He had put that silver ring on Shizun when he was possessed by his internal demons. Although he took it off, he knew the side effects of those demonic runes would linger.

Jiang Yinghe's eyelashes were a little wet. Even the knuckles of his fingers were a little red as he clenched them tightly. He didn't have the strength to curse, but he still tugged relentlessly at Li Huanhan's collar as he spoke. His hands were sweaty, and his breath felt like it was burrowing into his disciple's ears." ...No need. Get away from me."

Li Huanhan swallowed. After the fingers tugging at his collar loosened, he slowly got up. He tried to say something else before leaving, but he was pulled away by Qin Jun.

The three layers of the canopy drifted down, obscuring the person within.

Qin Jun stood in front of the gauze canopy for a while, consumed by his thoughts.

The canopy wasn't soundproof. Even though the sounds inside were very quiet, some of them were still audible.

Qin Jun turned around and gave Li Huanhan a look. Then he sat on a chair to the side of the bed and stared at this heavenly demon with an abnormal mind.

Actually, after the curtain closed, Li Huanhan's state appeared to improve a lot. His dark red eyes gradually returned to normal. By the time half the tea sitting on the table beside the bed had been drunk, he was completely his usual self.

Yet the internal demon patterns continued to pulsate with the beating of his heart.

Qin Jun poured himself a cup of cold tea from beside him while forcing himself to stare at him fixedly with hostility.

The only consolation of sorts was that he wasn't the only one suffering right now.

The sound of the tea pouring into the cup was unusually clear.

When the sound of water stopped, he heard Li Huanhan's dry inquiry.

"Where is Chang Ye?"

"I don't know." Qin Jun filled his mouth with tea after saying, "He probably went back to the demon tribes first to look for Yun-shishu."

"En." Li Huanhan remained silent for a moment, and then suddenly spoke again, "That bedding of yours..."

"Silver floss silkworm silk." Qin Jun replied slightly faster than before. "It's very soft and the same type used in the White Crane Jade Residence... The same material as the one you picked back then."

This was probably the most peaceful the two of them had ever been.

Well, they couldn't not be peaceful, or fight, or leave.

Their hearing was too keen. Listening to the one you love 'taking care of himself' was almost too much to bear.

There was some more silence. Qin Jun toyed with the teacup and hesitated a bit before saying, "Hasn't it been too long?"

Li Huanhan glanced up at him without immediately answering. Only after a long while did he quietly reply.

"...I can't hold on much longer."

"How many times does that thing of yours need?" Qin Jun swept a glance at the silver ring in his hand. He watched as this person inspected the demonic runes inscribed on it with a blank expression.

"...Twice."

"Twice... " Qin Jun sucked in a breath. In the end, he was too restless to sit down. He headed over to the bedside and paced aimlessly as he asked, "Shizun, are you...okay?"

It was quiet for a moment inside. The voice that came out was breathy, but it insisted on pretending to be strong.

"...I'm okay."

Well you sure don't sound like it.

Qin Jun couldn't sit still. He continued to compulsively wander around the canopy. After a moment, Li Huanhan suddenly spoke, "Sit down. You're bothering me."

"...Instead of waiting here, why don't you and I both go outside."

"Tsk," Qin Jun was slightly surprised, "So even you know how to let go sometimes."

Li Huanhan lifted his hand and flexed his fingers against his forehead to knock, his tone unpredictable, "It's better for you and me to go out and fight than to do so here."

Just as Qin Jun was about to sarcastically insult his predictability, his sleeve was suddenly held by a hand that emerged from the curtains.

The hand was slender, lean, and simply beautiful. But its palm was covered by a thin layer of sweat that made it somewhat slippery. The outline of its bones were all clearly distinguishable, and faint blue veins could be seen under the thin white skin.

Qin Jun immediately grasped his fingers and nervously said, "What's wrong?"

"...Clothes."

There were no more replacement robes in his spatial ring.

Who would've thought that within a short period of time, he would either lose or destroy all of his artifact-grade robes.

Jiang Yinghe loosened his grip slightly and shrank back, taking a look at his soiled garments...

One of them belonged to Li Huanhan.

Although a cleansing spell or something like that would completely take care of the soiled area, it still didn't sit right with him. Besides...he didn't know whether to praise or curse this demonic artifact. It was the first time he felt like the protagonist of a little yellow book.

He felt that touching anywhere right now was overwhelming and stimulating enough for him to involuntarily shed tears. A grown man like him didn't want to cry his eyes out, but it wasn't up to him anymore.

Especially with this tail that Chang Ye had attached before...

It was a constant distraction.

Jiang Yinghe was still a little uncomfortable. He felt that there was still some residual effect that he hadn't been able to let out, but he was too tired to care. It would burn out on its own eventually.

Thousands of years of being single and pure of heart had left his skills... He couldn't be too hard on himself.

He still felt sorry for himself, though.

He cast a spell on the soiled clothes and put them aside before changing into the clothes Qin Jun handed over. Sitting on the bed, he spaced out for a while. His mind remained mostly blank with the occasional flash of some distressing ideas.

This had happened more than once.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand and tried to steady his mind before parting the curtains. He spoke to Qin Jun outside, "This...Give this back to him!"

Qin Jun took the dark-coloured cloak and stared at Jiang Yinghe for a moment. He suddenly said, "Shizun."

"En?"

"Your face is a little red." Qin Jun touched his fingers to the other party's reddened cheeks, feeling his elevated temperature, "Are you still uncomfortable?"

Jiang Yinghe looked up at him, not knowing what to say. Everything he thought of in response seemed too embarrassing to say aloud. He remained silent even though Qin Jun hadn't planned this and had potentially prevented something worse from happening.

He shook his head and silently shrank back, even the perceived sound of his breathing became suppressed and slow.

Qin Jun's originally burning heart suddenly froze solid. It was as if his head had been split open and a pot of cold water was poured in. His mind immediately cleared as he tossed the cloak to Li Huanhan. His voice was chilly.

"Li Huanhan."

Li Huanhan caught the cloak and looked up. "What?"

"I really can't figure out why he's always so good to you."

Qin Jun turned around, his iron-gray eyes narrowing slightly. "Do you know how jealous I am of you?"

Li Huanhan looked back with his dark red eyes and asked, "How is he doing?"

"Don't even bother." Qin Jun laughed sarcastically, "...Shixiong."

—-

When Jiang Yinghe woke up the next day, the phosphorescent candle outside was still burning. The feverish feeling in his body had receded a lot.

He sat up and slowly processed his situation.

Outside the canopy, the wavering phosphorescent fires resembled fireflies in the night sky.

He tried to look at them calmly and thoughtfully as he attempted to contact the system in his head that seemed perfectly content to linger in the background.

"I've raised my disciples wrong. Can I...just leave them as is?"

The long-silent system was slow to reply.

"Don't give up. You haven't messed up. There's still hope."

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyebrows, "...What hope is there? Don't you know they all want to sleep with me? Aren't you the Shizun System? How can you say there's still hope?"

The system was silent for a moment before continuing its stereotypical reply.

"You can still be considered a good teacher...if you teach them in bed."

Jiang Yinghe gasped. "..."

"None of your disciples are experienced in this area either." The system methodically said, "This is also one of the teaching tasks."

Jiang Yinghe felt each blow. "..."

"The education of sex, love and death. This is a noble and great profession, Teacher Jiang."

Jiang Yinghe couldn't accept the system referring to him like that. He let out a long sigh. "Although your words are honeyed, I feel like my hands are tied."

The system was silent for another moment before continuing, "This is not only your mission, but mine as well."

"What is your mission?"

"...Salvation."

Jiang Yinghe sensed that this was an answer that was worthy of analysis despite its brevity. He immediately followed up by asking, "Whose salvation?"

The system, however, didn't answer and started playing dead again.

Jiang Yinghe lowered his head and thought for a while, but he couldn't come up with a more definite answer. He got up to wash up and change his clothes, wanting to change out of this shirt that he had temporarily

borrowed yesterday. He steeled his heart to face those two, yet found that only the Golden Boy and the Jade Girl were guarding the bedchambers.

Neither of the two children dared to doze off. They just stood there, somewhat wronged like they had been scolded by Qin Jun, each more pitiful than the other. When they saw that Jiang Yinghe was awake, the Golden Boy presented the washing utensils that Qin Jun had ordered to be prepared and a set of pale green cultivator robes.

Jiang Yinghe asked, "Where are Qin Jun and Li Huanhan?"

"Patriarch-daren," the Golden Boy deflated, "is working on the River Styx."

"The Demon Lord is also there." The Jade Maiden followed up, "They left early in the morning."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. He knew that one shouldn't judge ghost cultivators by their outward appearance, but to distract himself from the events of last night he asked, "Why do you two look so down? How old are you?"

The Golden Boy was already feeling down and Jiang Yinghe's question only made him feel worse. He wiped his tears and wailed, "I'm only 841 years old! If the beauty lets me t-take in a big whiff of your scent, I'll stop crying..."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

—-

Wanyao City.

Devil Baron Sanqing swallowed dryly. He carefully peeked at his ancestor before shivering as he answered, "My brother, h-he didn't come back..." The red-clothed young man in front of him played with his flute without any particular expression on his face. He just tapped the emerald green instrument against his palm. "He's not here? Where's my Shishu if Wu Chengyu isn't here?"

"Um, this subordinate doesn't know either." Sanqing said with a bitter face, "I had already sent a letter to Chengyu asking him to release the hostage. It's just that Chengyu said...that they already, um, became cultivation partners. He also said that Xiao Yun-shishu ate something bad and needed to recuperate."

There was a crisp sound.

Chang Ye just lightly tapped the edge of the table and a portion was cut off. He then smiled icily as if he hadn't noticed.

"If you don't know," he paused for a moment, "then I'll drain you all of your blood and use the bloodline tracing technique to find Wu Chengyu."

Sanqing didn't dare to act out. He could only offer up the communication artifact he used to get in contact with his brother with trembling hands. He whispered, "H-he's a tiger and I'm a bird. We're not blood related, Venerated Ancestor..."

Chang Ye gave him a look and took the tablet that could transmit sound. He carefully probed the demonic energy on the other side.

...What a strong medicinal scent.

Author's Corner

I worked through the night to revise this chapter. Does it look better now?

Rain

I would like to take a moment to thank Sahl. She is an amazing editor and her additions are on point

Seriously, this novel wouldn't be the same without her

Sahl

I'd love to say thank you so much for the overwhelming approval on extra spice! 😘 Some lovely readers queried where I freely distributed the spice

as they couldn't tell. As a writer and an editor in real life, I strongly believe in not interfering with an author's 'voice'. So I am delighted that the effect is seamless. 😊

Also, just a note. Rain does all the heavy lifting on translating (so please support her). I edit (and add spice 😏). While I absolutely appreciate people acknowledging the work I do (editors need love too❣), I just wanted to clarify.

Ahem...also because I can't resist your concerns (and while I ❤ Huanhan, I do love Jun-er and baby Chang Ye too)...Remember, this isn't a harem novel...However, no one gets left behind... *winks heavily*

OceanofPDF.com

CH50 - YOU'LL LISTEN TO EVERYTHING I SAY? (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

When the River Styx was reopened, tens of millions of living souls surged up from the bottom of the river. The ghost cultivators observed the surface of the water and saw that the rift in the sky had finally returned to its usual state.

"Before returning to Peng Lai, we should go to devil territory once more to look for Xiao Yun-shidi..." Jiang Yinghe stroked Wangchen as he pondered how to find him, not noticing a familiar scent getting closer and closer.

Until a warm breath hit his neck.

When Jiang Yinghe looked up suddenly, he saw Li Huanhan's bloodshot red eyes. His demeanor seemed as calm as ever.

"I'm sorry." Li Huanhan looked down and helped adjust his collar, smoothing out some of the folds with his fingertips. He whispered, "I shouldn't have lost control yesterday... Are you still angry?"

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look and brushed his hands aside. He said indifferently, "It would be best if you kept your distance from me."

Although Li Huanhan was very gentle when he was sane, he was completely out of control when not. Jiang Yinghe felt that if Qin Jun hadn't shown up in time that day, he would have absolutely dared to take things to their logical conclusion.

Li Huanhan stared at his figure and remained silent for a moment, until he heard Qin Jun's arrogant and slightly mocking laughter from his side.

"Li-shixiong," The wraith proposed with great delight, "Why don't you just have your cultivation sealed and allow Shizun to relieve his anger?"

"You're so talkative today." Li Huanhan said.

Even though they were already preparing to depart for devil territory, the air between these two was still stifling and tense, like an explosion waiting to happen.

Just as a match seemed to be lit, the transmission tablet by Jiang Yinghe's side suddenly lit up. From it came Zhou Zhengping's voice.

"Jiang-shidi."

Jiang Yinghe withdrew Wangchen and responded, "I'm listening. Please speak, Shixiong."

Zhou Zhengping's voice was a bit tired, but it seemed to be mental fatigue rather than physical exertion.

"Your disciple...the Devil King Tianhou helped us find Xiao Yun-shidi."

Jiang Yinghe was slightly taken aback. He thought this should be good news so he said, "Did something happen? Zhangmen-shixiong, your voice doesn't sound...too good."

Zhou Zhengping was silent for a moment. "We'll discuss this matter together when you return."

The transmission cut off.

Jiang Yinghe stared at the tablet in a bit of a daze. His fingertips slid over it. He took a deep breath and cleared his mind before saying, "We don't need to visit the devils anymore. We will head back to Peng Lai."

—-

Although only a pittance of time had passed since he had left, it felt like he hadn't returned for a lifetime.

The disciples of the Peng Lai Sect seemed to have grown up. Many of them had experienced the previous stormy war between the various clans and had rescued many of the people who had come to seek refuge. There was now an air of maturity about them.

This serenity became a characteristic of righteous disciples as they gained experience, and it was also the atmosphere that Jiang Yinghe had become accustomed to.

The Peng Lai disciples hadn't been informed of Li Huanhan and Qin Jun's identities yet, and the Yao Wang Valley cultivators who returned from the Sword Saint's old residence were tight-lipped.

In the eyes of the Peng Lai Immortal Sect, they were still the disciples of Xuan Wei Xianjun, Shixiongs that many of them measured themselves against.

This also included Chang Ye.

Jiang Yinghe didn't show his face in front of the disciples. Instead, he rushed directly to the meeting place. The soul lamp suddenly brightened with his return, and even the depressed spiritual cranes of Qin Jing Peak rose from their slumber, wandering around and eagerly awaiting their master.

When Jiang Yinghe entered the room, he realized that there were not only people from Peng Lai, but also several Yao Wang Valley cultivators in turquoise clothes, as well as a large devil.

Zhou Zhengping was seated in the foremost seat, Yan Caiwei and Xiao Yun-shidi to his left and right. There was a white tiger lying at his shidi's feet.

Jiang Yinghe was wearing cultivator robes and his appearance was as good as ever. Those assembled were unable to see any difference from his usual self. When the Yao Wang Valley cultivators saw him, they stood up in

unison and bowed, as if they still felt guilty about what happened in the past.

Chou Yonghe was among them, but he wasn't in the lead this time. Yao Wang Valley's Xuan Hu Zhenren, Sect Master Zhang personally came to visit.

"Jiang-shidi." Yan Caiwei said, "Did anything happen during your time in the Nether Realm?"

Jiang Yinghe sat beside Yun Buxiu and observed his appearance from the side before he said, "Everything went well. May I ask the reason for why Yao Wang Valley is visiting at this time?"

After a moment of silence, Chou Yonghe stepped forward and cupped his fists in a salute, "Jiang Xianjun. We are deeply ashamed."

Although Jiang Yinghe always suffered at the expense of his three disciples, in the eyes of the cultivation world he was still the thousand-year old sword cultivator who remained as untouchable and cold as a frozen blade. He could be called a senior in both experience and realm.

What's more, the group from Yao Wang Valley practically owed him their lives. Their attitudes have always been very polite and deferential.

"In fact, your faction's Yun Zhenzhen has been temporarily residing in Yao Cao Valley until a few days ago."

Jiang Yinghe slightly raised his eyebrows, "Peng Lai has been searching for him for a long time. Why was Yao Wang Valley unwilling to disclose this?"

"...I'm the one who didn't let them say anything."

Jiang Yinghe turned at that towards Yun Buxiu who was lowering his head to stroke the white tiger's head, then at Zhou Zhengping who had been pinching the bridge of his nose and reciting a mantra under his breath. He felt like there was more to this than first met the eye.

Just as he wanted to ask further, Yan Caiwei coughed lightly and imploringly said, "Yesterday, when Tianhou...Chang Ye brought him back, he already told us. Xiao Yun-shidi accidentally ingested the Yin-Yang Fruit. He had left devil territory a long time ago to go to Yao Wang Valley for treatment in secret."

The Yin-Yang Fruit... Jiang Yinghe's mind went blank for a moment. His original words of inquiry were all swallowed back. He glanced at the white tiger by Yun Buxiu's side and asked, "...What is going on here? Why is this devil in its original form?"

He actually had a few speculations in his mind, but he wasn't sure. Just before Yun Buxiu replied, Xuan Hu Zhenren saw that their faces didn't look good and immediately excused himself, leaving behind some prescriptions and pills he had used over the past few days.

The door opened and closed.

Yun Buxiu looked down at the ground for a moment and said, "Wu Chengyu divided his devil core in two and used half to refine into an accessory for me. That's why he's in this state."

Jiang Yinghe knocked on the table in front of him and said, "If I remember correctly, that kind of spiritual fruit was originally given to top devil cultivators to harmonise their yin and yang energy when they transformed."

The palace was silent again.

"...Yes."

Jiang Yinghe rubbed his temples and managed to temporarily smooth out his confused thoughts. He picked up the prescriptions left behind by Xuan Hu Zhenren for a moment before saying, "Other than that, did you suffer any other grievances?"

Yun Buxiu shook his head. He was afraid to speak.

He's fine now." Yan Caiwei said, "Because of the accessory from the white tiger, his injuries were temporarily stabilized."

Jiang Yinghe noted that Yan Caiwei used the word 'temporarily' and subconsciously followed up, "What about later? How is he supposed to recuperate from this?"

Only after he spoke did he realize how it sounded. "Don't force yourself if it's inconvenient to say. I'll just go check the library myself."

The white tiger lying beside Yun Buxiu rumbled and licked the back of his hand.

Yun Buxiu soothingly rubbed it on the head and whispered, "I originally wanted to settle this matter before returning to Peng Lai, so I stayed at Yao Wang Valley for a while... I wanted to tactfully inform Shixiong of the matter between Wu Chengyu and I, but all I've done is made you worry."

Jiang Yinghe's mood was extremely complicated. Even the way he gazed at Xiao Yun-shidi became a fraction softer. "There are good and bad individuals, even among the devil race. There is no need to feel guilty. Knowing that you're fine is enough for me.

Yun Buxiu nodded, moved. He asked, "Then what of Shixiong's three disciples—"

"Cough cough cough..."

His question was interrupted by coughing fit. Yun Buxiu looked towards Zhangmen-shixiong in confusion and saw Zhou Zhengping shake his whisk and say gravely, "Go back and rest first. We will figure out a way to deal with this. I still have something to discuss with your Jiang-shixiong."

Although Yun Buxiu was curious, he had become much more steadfast after accidentally eating that damned fruit. He didn't ask any more questions.

Jiang Yinghe watched as Xiao Yun-shidi and the white tiger left before gently shaking the prescriptions in his hand. "All of these are meant to

dispel yin and replenish yang. Wouldn't there be a deficiency if they were all taken?"

Yan Caiwei shook her head, "No need to worry. The quality of the fruit he took by mistake was very good, so he has to recuperate slowly."

"...Alright then." Jiang Yinghe reluctantly accepted and asked, "...What's that white tiger's relationship with him?"

Yan Caiwei and Zhou Zhengping looked at each other. Zhou-shixiong didn't look too good. He sighed and said, "They are...cultivation partners."

Jiang Yinghe was startled.

Although he had a suspicion, he still felt like a perfectly good cabbage of his had been trampled by a pig. Just as he was picking out the various faults of that devil as the cabbage farmer, he heard Zhangmen-shixiong's question.

"Li Huanhan and Qin Jun both came back?"

Jiang Yinghe returned to his senses. "En."

"Jiang-shidi," Zhou Zhengping paused, "Then you..."

"I have no passion root. As their teacher, this responsibility is mine alone." Jiang Yinghe said, "It's already not easy for the three of them to settle down. And I've always felt that...even if I could feel something, I wouldn't be able to choose."

"Indeed." Yan Caiwei agreed, "Looking back over recent events, it seems that the effects of any upset would be felt by all."

While Jiang Yinghe silently nodded, he heard Yan-shijie continue.

"But in my opinion, I still want for you to follow your own heart and not have to be wronged for the sake of the world."

"Wronged is not the word I would use." Jiang Yinghe gazed at the teacup in his hand and sighed lightly as he recalled something, "My guilty conscience

bars me from making a choice. Rather than for the greater good, it's more like I don't want to hurt any of them."

"You're often like this. We should've expected it." Yan Caiwei ran a hand through her hair and said solemnly, "If you were to sacrifice your freedom for a momentary stability, not only us, but even the future generations of Peng Lai would not be willing to accept this peace. Whether you have no feelings for any of them or just one, we will stand behind you."

Jiang Yinghe was not surprised by his shijie's attitude. Their long acquaintance led to mutual understanding. He nodded, "I understand."

Then Zhou Zhengping spoke again, "I heard Qin Jun's words from before. He seemed set on retrieving your passion root."

Jiang Yinghe pondered silently for a moment. "Truth be told, I also considered it. However, any matter related to Hundun needs to be carefully thought through."

"I was talking to him when I said to carefully consider things, not you." Zhou Zhengping frowned, "If the three of them can join forces to completely eradicate Hundun, it would be a great blessing for all realms."

Jiang Yinghe understood what he meant. He thought about their current relationship with each other. "There is hope for Huanhan and Jun-er, but as for Chang Ye...I don't know if he would be willing."

Zhou Zhengping nodded and didn't ask any more questions. "Abbot Chan Qing of Lan Ruo Temple asked me to relay a message to you. If you decide to retrieve your passion root back, you must go and meet him beforehand."

Although Jiang Yinghe didn't know what he had to say, he somehow had a feeling that it was something important, so he agreed.

—-

White Crane Jade Manor, Qing Jing Peak.

When Jiang Yinghe arrived at the front gate, several spiritual cranes couldn't conceal their happiness and acted cute in front of him for a while until those shapely and beautiful hands petted them enough. Only then did they gently peck him to tell him to go in quickly.

Although Li Huanhan and Qin Jun were traveling with him, after entering Peng Lai, Jiang Yinghe let them return to their old residences as he went to the meeting place alone. He hadn't returned to the White Crane Jade Manor until now.

Beyond the door, everything inside was the same as before, untouched by dust. Jiang Yinghe walked to the mantle and placed Wangchen back in its spot. His hand brushed over the hilt as he remembered how he had removed the sword pendant and returned it to Li Huanhan.

He walked past the mantle and took out a book from the top of the shelf. He glanced at the familiar handwriting on it, as well as the small note he had placed as a bookmark inside. Taking it out, he saw a phrase written neatly on it.

"I wish that I was a star and you were the moon."

It was Chang Ye's handwriting. He had loved coming to his place since he was a child, picking out books he had read and pestering Jiang Yinghe until he listened to his recounts of them.

He once thought of this person as a pure and innocent child, with a heart that was clear enough to see through with a single glance. He believed him to be inexperienced, naive, and very reliant on his elders.

But now, in hindsight, this archdevil who lived through the dark ages had experienced countless baptisms of war. His absolutely harmless appearance was just the most flawless mask in his collection.

The naive one was him.

Jiang Yinghe caressed the inscription. He thought about Li Huanhan's calm and restrained demeanour. His handwriting resembled him, ordinary on the

surface with sharp blades hidden within its depths. Chang Ye's handwriting was proper, prim and beautiful from all angles. It inspired a sense of calm in all who saw it, betraying nothing about the person himself. And Qin Jun...

Jun-er's handwriting was more akin to ghostly runes... Forget it, it was best to let him be.

Two hundred years weren't enough to improve his scrawl. He could probably win last place in his kindergarten class by a landslide.

Jiang Yinghe put the book back and was about to look at something else when he felt a pair of hands encircle his waist from behind.

"Shizun..."

He couldn't hear the footsteps of those three anymore. Only by the voice was he able to tell that it was Chang Ye. Chang Ye had accompanied Xiao Yun-shidi back. There was almost no chance he would leave, easily knowing Jiang Yinghe returned as well.

Jiang Yinghe had a premonition, but he didn't turn around. He continued to pull out another book and said, "What are you doing here?"

A little tremor passed through the breathing behind him.

"Shizun, I've brought Xiao Yun-shishu back." He buried himself against Jiang Yinghe's shoulder, and basked in that familiar cold fragrance, "Don't abandon Ye-er. Ye-er really does like Shizun. I was wrong before. I'll change everything Shizun doesn't like about me, okay?"

Jiang Yinghe calmly flipped through the book in his hand. "Why did you kill the people from He Huan Sect?"

"The two of them insulted Shizun." Chang Ye slowly tightened his grip around his waist, "I couldn't let them speak like that anymore..."

Jiang Yinghe's continued perusing the book. "Then when you gave me the rabbit devil disguise, when you turned into a white cat to gain sympathy,

and when you opened your mouth to deceive me, did you ever feel righteous indignation for me or consider my feelings at all?"

After a moment of silence, Jiang Yinghe heard a choking sound that Chang Ye couldn't hold back.

He was really a child on this point; very good at shedding tears on demand.

Jiang Yinghe sighed and took out the note tucked into this book. He recognized his own handwriting and casually turned it over to see words Chang Ye had written as well. His joy, dreams and youthful innocence at the time could easily be seen.

Jiang Yinghe looked at it for a moment before he heard a quiet voice from behind.

"I'll change it all, Shizun... I'll definitely change. Please don't abandon me, Ye-er was wrong... I'll listen to everything Shizun says from now on."

Perhaps the voice of the youth admitting his mistake was too sincere, or perhaps Jiang Yinghe had spoiled him for so many years and wasn't quite used to the sound of his crying.

Jiang Yinghe turned around to look at the red-clothed teenager in front of him. He asked in an indifferent tone, "You'll listen to everything I say?"

Chang Ye looked at him pitifully and nodded.

Then he heard Jiang Yinghe calmly say.

"En... Then turn into a cat."

Author's Corner

I'm going to whine like Chang Ye!

Shizun, Shizun I'm still small,

Shizun, Shizun let me off,

Shizun, Shizun I will change,

Please don't leave me I was wrong,

I'll listen to you from now on QAQ

Jiang "I would rather look at a cat than the person" Yinghe: Change back already.

Qin "My handwriting looks like ghostly runes" Jun: Although I don't know what kindergarten is, isn't winning good? (wraith-like question mark)

Sahl

Shizun: 'Mic drop'.

OceanofPDF.com

CH51 - PLEASE DON'T ABANDON ME (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Everything was the same on Qing Jing Peak. The wind was the only sound that could be heard.

The cranes cried outside.

A white cat was curled up on the corner of the desk, watching Jiang Yinghe sit near the bookshelf perusing the books. His pointy cat ears twitched and his tail swayed occasionally, like he was suppressing the urge to bat at the human with his paws.

But when Jiang Yinghe turned the page and gave him a look, the kitten's paws paused and shrank back. He could only bite his fluffy tail in resignation.

He wasn't even allowed to touch him a bit...

The white cat held its tail and licked its fur. He watched as Jiang Yinghe searched intently for information about the Yin Yang Fruit. Chang Ye couldn't help but quietly say, "It should be fine if he just takes the Yao Wang Valley's prescriptions diligently."

Jiang Yinghe didn't even look at him as he reached for the next ancient tomb. He said indifferently, "Do you know the details of what happened?"

Chang Ye had naturally interrogated Wu Chengyu. He leaned over and nuzzled his Shizun's hand with his head. "Pet me first."

Jiang Yinghe stiffened and pushed the white cat away. "Nevermind. Shidi has shared what he wanted, so I shouldn't ask more."

He continued to read about the Endless Sky Watchtower, the Devil God Hundun, and Sword Saint Taichu. He didn't have time to go through these records before, but he intended to correct that now.

The Endless Sky Watchtower seemed to be inhabited by the founder of this world, a true Daoist Ancestor. However, there was no record of this vague speculation anywhere. The description of the Devil God Hundun was very detailed, but after thousands of years it was inevitably distorted. The cat in front of him would be a much better source of information.

As for Sword Saint Taichu....

Jiang Yinghe slowly traced his fingers over the words. He heard an aggrieved meowl from the side.

...What a spoilt child.

Jiang Yinghe continued what he was doing while he listened to the quiet sounds of the kitten's paws stomping around the desk. He felt the other's fluffy tail anxiously whipping around, sweeping up more dust than any whisk.

After some time, Chang Ye finally couldn't take it anymore and snuck towards his Shizun on his kitten paws. His fluffy tail tentatively and pitifully curled around his finger.

Jiang Yinghe looked up at him.

The kitten immediately withdrew its tail and sat upright on the edge of the desk. His meows were both expectant and apprehensive.

I've attracted his attention this time, right?

...Why hasn't Shizun petted me yet?

Jiang Yinghe stared into his dark, round pupils silently for a long while before saying, "Get down from there."

The kitten blinked, "...?!"

"Your presence here has been nothing but a hindrance to me." Jiang Yinghe said, "Li Huanhan is in his Winter Storm Residence and Qin Jun is at the Late Autumn Courtyard. Go wherever you wish."

Chang Ye stayed for a while. It was the first time in his cat life that he had suffered such a heavy blow. He mumbled for a moment, not daring to speak as he curled his tail tighter to his side. His paws clenched the tip of his tail and he looked down to lick it once.

He didn't even dare to mewl anymore.

Jiang Yinghe watched as he retreated backwards after suffering a shock and gently raised his eyebrows in warning, "Be careful, you're going to fall..."

Before he was finished speaking, this fluffy, long-haired kitty tumbled from the table.

Jiang Yinghe got up to take a look and saw that this half-witted cat almost flipped over. It narrowly managed to land on its paws before dropping to the ground in a huff.

Thank goodness.

Jiang Yinghe continued to flip through the pages and paused on the final line of Sword Saint Taichu's entry.

"...Distant and aloof, he claimed to already have an intended. There were rumours that he had been separated from his cultivation partner long ago, or that his wife had died and he'd sworn off romance for the rest of his life."

Simply put, it's about how Sword Saint Taichu claimed to be married, but people gossiped that he's either separated from his partner long ago or that they had already died.

No wonder all of the items at his residence were in pairs... Jiang Yinghe pondered this for a moment, thinking about the warning left behind by that senior transmigrator. The doubts in his heart only grew.

...Was he really idle enough to speculate about this right now? Shouldn't he be more worried about his own problems?

Jiang Yinghe simply couldn't make sense of it. None of his various theories were quite right. The cries of a cat startled him from his introspection.

He raised his head and watched as Chang Ye jumped onto the table, the fur on his tail puffing up. Even the fur on his spine stood up on end. He followed Chang Ye's gaze and finally noticed that someone was lightly knocking at the door.

There was only one person he knew that knocked in such a methodical fashion...

It was Li Huanhan.

Jiang Yinghe was still angry and didn't really want to see him.

When Chang Ye saw that Jiang Yinghe didn't respond right away, his tail decreased quite a bit in volume as he hugged its tip once again and groomed himself. Then he leapt a few steps closer to his Shizun...

Where he was immediately stopped by a look from Jiang Yinghe.

...The cat's scheme collapsed on him before he was even half way through executing it.

The little white cat retracted its paws, and then his entire body. Even his ears revealed a sense of grievance. The little ears that were originally standing up were completely flat against his head.

The knocking from outside stopped.

Jiang Yinghe thought that he had left... After all, Li Huanhan now had some control over that internal demon. But ever since that night, he'd always been

afraid of that look on Huanhan's face.

The person he knew would never wear that expression.

To Jiang Yinghe, the first disciple he spent so long with was clearly the most gentle, introverted and trustworthy person he knew. But the times when Li Huanhan's internal demon possessed him had taught him a lesson. Even if they shared the same face, their moral compasses diverged completely.

He could come to accept being forced in the heat of the moment.

But that man at the time knew exactly what he was doing.

The wind picked up even more.

Jiang Yinghe thought he had left and absentmindedly swept his sixth sense over to confirm if anyone was outside the door. He immediately sensed that Li Huanhan was actually still out there. He hadn't moved an inch.

What was this?

Jiang Yinghe suddenly recalled the day Li Huanhan bade him farewell in the early morning. He was being tormented by the after-effects of the Seven Days of Joy then, and Li Huanhan left the day after that incident. When they met once more, his disciple had become a changed man, haunted by his internal demons.

Perhaps changed wasn't the best word to describe it. Rather, it was like something he had once concealed could no longer be hidden.

Jiang Yinghe thought of what Li Huanhan had once said...that he was afraid of hurting him.

His hand paused from turning the page. Then his sixth sense allowed him to feel that Li Huanhan had lifted his robe and knelt down.

He stiffened and glanced towards the door, but he still said nothing.

How similar the two situations were.

Jiang Yinghe closed his eyes and sighed deeply, glancing at the stunned cat by his side. "Go out and tell him to leave. I'm not angry, but..."

Jiang Yinghe thought about it some more and said, "There are some things that I must do on my own."

Chang Ye didn't expect Li Huanhan to be so cunning. While he was recovering from this incredible shock, he heard Jiang Yinghe's indifferent and calm voice. He was about to ask if he could accompany him when he heard his Shizun continue.

"Tell me the incantation to remove the tail." Jiang Yinghe looked at him, "If you lie to me again, I'll take you to be neutered."

Jiang Yinghe looked way too serious. The little kitten felt a chill in a certain place on his body and obediently picked up the ink brush in Jiang Yinghe's hand with his tail. He wrote out the spell with immaculate strokes.

...So he could write with his tail, and the handwriting was even the same.

Jiang Yinghe took the paper and picked up a different book. His tone was clear and calm, like he was speaking to a stranger. "If Jun-er comes over, tell him the same thing. Now go."

Chang Ye softly meowed, then jumped down from the table and squeezing out the door with a flick of his bushy tail.

The wind was indeed colder outside.

The spiritual cranes nearby were still sleeping peacefully.

When Chang Ye looked at his shixiong, he noticed that this heavenly demon's tattoo-like patterns seemed to have receded. His situation seemed to have improved.

He was the one who had guessed wrong. It really was the internal demon before. But it seemed like Li Huanhan was on the right path to figuring out

how to control it.

His gaze then shifted downward. a black-scaled, red-eyed snake was peeking out of the other party's dark sleeve, emitting an overwhelming demonic aura from its entire body.

This should be his Blood Shadow. A demon that was rumored to be able to locate everyone it has ever seen for the Xuehu Demon Lord.

Chang Ye snorted as his paws began to itch. He knew that Li Huanhan saw through his disguise, but he didn't react at all.

"Shizun told you to go away." The kitten unceremoniously stated as he stretched out in front of him, "He has things to do and no time for you."

Those blood red eyes looked at him. Without saying a word, they turned to the interior of the door.

He hated it when things were out of his control, but this person has always been a recurring thorn at his side.

While the white kitten was meowing up a storm, Li Huanhan stood up and knocked on the door again, saying in a voice barely above a whisper, "Shizun."

"I lost control before and treated you..." Li Huanhan paused, "I always speak of respect, but others have treated you better than me. I was too greedy. If my best efforts can only cause you pain, it would be better to seal my cultivation so I could stay by your side and take care of you without worry..."

The white kitten next to him had opened his eyes wide in surprise and choked. Chang Ye sprang up and asked sharply, "What did you do to him?! Li Huanhan, have you no shame?!? Hey..."

Li Huanhan completely ignored the cat jumping up and down. He asked seriously, "May I come in?"

There was still no reply from within. Li Huanhan waited patiently, stewing in his own thoughts until his anxiety boiled over. He swept his sixth sense outwards—

There was no one inside.

Li Huanhan pushed open the door. He took in the sword mantle, bed, bookshelf, and table inside. Everything was the same as before, even the decorations and the tea set were familiar to him.

But there was no one here.

There were many books piled on the desk, and Wangchen was in its customary spot atop the sword mantle. A sheet of plain white paper laid on the desk with not a single word written on it.

The scene before him seemed like one of his dreams.

It was as if he had returned to Qing Jing Peak as it was before, when he stayed by his Shizun's side with that outrageous wish hidden in his heart. But the things they had experienced since could no longer be explained by the words Shizun and Disciple.

Li Huanhan walked over and ran his fingertips over the table. He slowly closed his eyes and let out a breath.

The white cat on the side immediately transformed back into a red-clothed boy. He seemed even more overwhelmed than Li Huanhan.

"He said that turning into a cat would earn...his forgiveness."

"He told me to tell you something. Shizun said he had something to do on his own."

Chang Ye's words came to a halt. Then there was a very slight and quiet sob.

He didn't want to cry in front of his rival.

But he couldn't hold back his emotions.

Chang Ye crumpled the paper on the table, but he smoothed it out again, fearing Jiang Yinghe's displeasure later. He choked as he did so with extreme reluctance.

"Please don't abandon me..."

He repeated it like a mantra to himself for some time before wiping his eyes and whispering again.

"Shizun...won't you look at how obedient I am now...?"

This was hardly a case of doing unto others as they do unto to you. It wasn't an outright lie either, at most it was just Shizun not saying goodbye.

But he was not owed such a courtesy from Jiang Yinghe.

Chang Ye has always been able to consider all the possibilities, He might get carried away sometimes, but it didn't stop him from feeling sorrow. He felt like the cold jade walls of the White Crane Jade Manor were like sheets of ice.

It was so cold in here without Shizun.

"I know that I was wrong, ah. Please let me stay with you..." he whispered something more in tears before managing to collect himself in front of his rival. Yet he was too tired to be hostile towards Li Huanhan right now.

Shizun was the only one on his mind.

If not receiving a farewell made him feel like this, then how did all the things he did before make Shizun feel?

—-

Peng Lai Side Palace.

"There is no need to be like this, Patriarch Qin." Zhou Zhengping waved his whisk, "Although the events of the past have troubled Peng Lai, they have also provided a generation of disciples with invaluable experience. There is no need to apologize for this."

He watched as Qin Jun recovered gradually. This was the first time he felt someone else appear in the eyes of this arrogant and conceited wraith.

But it was more correct to say that he came reluctantly, for Jiang-shidi's sake. However, his performance thus far had been flawless, not giving Zhou Zhengping and Yan Caiwei any hint that he was looking down on them.

It was not everyday that a superior being would bow to you.

Yan Caiwei added, "Moreover, we have no reason to interfere in the matter between you and Jiang-shidi. Although Patriarch Qin is nominally a disciple of Peng Lai, you are Jiang-shidi's disciple alone."

"Many thanks." Qin Jun said, "Since the day of our reunion, I have felt repentant for my actions. I will show him the utmost respect, so the two of you needn't worry."

This conversation was quite a bit like a friendly chat between the two families brought together by a couple. Yan Caiwei was almost fooled into agreeing. As she wanted to redirect the topic, she heard her Shixiong say from beside her, "It seems like Jiang-shidi...just left?"

Yan Caiwei was stunned. "But he just came back! Didn't we tell him that Xiao Yun-shidi would recover from his injuries with time? He doesn't need to worry about that, so where did he go?"

Zhou Zhengping was just about to speak when he saw that Qin Jun was also staring straight at him. He sighed before saying, "Perhaps he went out to clear his head."

Yan Caiwei's words became stuck in her mouth. She recalled the sporadic news and rumours about what her Shidi had gone through recently, and her emotions became complicated. She sighed, "With Jiang-shidi's degree of

cultivation, he would be fine anywhere. His biggest problem is the three disciples around him."

She didn't mince her words just because Qin Jun was around.

Zhou Zhengping nodded, then looked at Qin Jun and said solemnly, "I hope that Patriarch Qin will be understanding of his decision and refrain from searching for him. Allow him a moment of peace."

He could feel the precision of a Half-step Golden Immortal as Qin Jun breathed in deeply. Naturally, he could also feel the dense and cold resentful energy that surrounded the other when his emotions fluctuated.

After a moment, the dense miasma dissipated entirely. The surroundings suddenly became completely silent.

"...Alright."

Author's Corner

The doors of the crematorium have opened before you~

The attitudes of my readers are unfathomable like the depths of the sea... Let me see if HeHe's heart of steel will break first or yours.

About Xiao Yun's relationship...there's no noncon. I've always wanted to gradually reveal the details, so please be patient... I like you guys so much, so let's communicate more amicably~

Happy holidays!

OceanofPDF.com

CH52 - WHY WON'T YOU EVEN PET ME (Draft)

Thank you Barry and Mo for the Ko-fis!

Editor: Sahloknir

Lan Ruo Temple

A cluster of orchids that were not yet in bloom grew outside the meditation room. A few ants crawled beneath their leaves.

As the faint breeze entered the window, the slow and steady chanting within stopped.

Chan Qing looked at him silently, taking in how Jiang Yinghe's black hair was tied up with a silver crown and a long hairpin. His pastel coloured cultivator robes gave off an air of extreme remoteness.

"Jiang Xianjun."

Jiang Yinghe came out from his thoughts. He apologized for spacing out, "I couldn't immerse my troubled mind in the mantras. Apologies for disturbing you, Abbot."

"Xianjun is too polite." Chan Qing bent down and poured him a cup of bitter tea. He looked at him carefully before saying, "Do you remember the words that this one spoke when telling your fortunes last time?."

Of course Jiang Yinghe remembered. He also remembered the inconsistency in the senior's attitude back then. It seemed so obvious in hindsight how strange and suspicious the identities of his disciples were.

When Chan Qing met his eyes, he knew what Jiang Yinghe was thinking about. He continued, "Now that you know everything, I will be frank."

Zhangmen-shixiong was the one who told Jiang Yinghe to come to Lan Ruo Temple. He assumed that it must be because the Abbot had something important to discuss, so he looked at the other man with a calm mind.

"This one said that the souls of Xianjun's three disciples, the three evil cultivators of today, were too light."

"What does this mean?" Jiang Yinghe did remember this, and a strange premonition suddenly rose in his heart. He felt like the other party's next words could be life changing.

"The archdevil from 10,000 years ago was born in the era when the Devil God was at his most powerful. He used his unmatched talent to suppress Hundun and sealed them both away." Chan Qing's gaze turned to the chessboard. The white piece he set down cut off a possible formation. "A wraith—the patriarch of all ghost cultivators—was born 3000 years ago. Then the Xuehe Demon Lord with the heavenly demon physique followed 2000 years after that."

The more he went on, the more Jiang Yinghe felt his heartstrings tremble with an inexplicable anxiety.

Abbot Chan Qing was a longtime friend of Zhangmen-shixiong, and he was also Jiang Yinghe's elder in terms of seniority. It wasn't out of the ordinary for him to know these things, but...

"This one often recalled that day afterwards." Chan Qing said, "Such light souls almost seemed incomplete...or in other words, only all three of their souls combined would equal Xianjun's soul.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't look away from the Abbot. He didn't answer immediately, because he had no idea what to say. He clasped his teacup with one hand, as the other man's words echoed through his mind. The tea seemed to become scalding hot in an instant.

A light rain began to fall outside the window. The raindrops created a soothing ambiance as they fell onto the leaves of the orchids and slid to the ground, where they shattered.

Chan Qing lowered his head, glancing at the chessboard and issuing a reminder, "Xianjun, it's your turn now."

Jiang Yinghe looked down and placed his piece before taking a sip of Lan Ruo Temple's tea... This cup wasn't Morushui. In fact, it was so bitter that it numbed his tongue.

He put down the cup and placed his long fingers on the table, slowly tightening his grip.

"Abbot..."

Chan Qing muttered a Buddhist prayer, picking up his unsaid question. "The details of what this one saw that day cannot be shared with Xianjun. I can only tell you that the three of them are most likely three parts of the soul of a single person. And the only one that can hold such power even after being split in three is most likely the Dao Ancestor."

Jiang Yinghe also understood this, but what he knew even more clearly was that, if what Abbot Chan Qing had said was true, then the reason that this person divided his soul was probably just to further his cultivation.

Perhaps he, Jiang Yinghe, was just...a stepping stone for someone else's path to the Dao.

Jiang Yinghe took another sip of tea. His tongue was numb to the bitterness, as though taste buds had been burnt away. The flavour on the tip of his tongue felt as if he had been scalded.

But the porcelain walls of the teacup in his hand were merely warm.

The warmth flooded his throat as he swallowed.

"The path to the Dao is treacherous and filled with hardships, for the world is ever changing." Chan Qing quietly looked at him, "Yesterday, the Peng

Lai Sect Master sent word to this one, saying that you were troubled by a tribulation of love. But how can you be in such a predicament with your passion root severed?"

He watched as Jiang Yinghe put down his tea cup and gazed at the chess pieces.

"It is only now that this one understands. This so-called love is the one between a teacher and his disciples."

Chan Qing looked out the window at the rain.

"This one would like to give Xianjun a word of advice. Regardless of whether you are successful in killing Hundun and retrieving your passion root or not, a tribulation of love can be just as deadly as a heavenly one..." he paused, "When their three souls realign, their currently deep feelings may be dispelled, as if it were all a dream on the path to enlightenment."

The downpour slowly became heavier. The orchid leaves were beaten down, like a sea of bright green throughout the paths.

What Elder Chan Qing said would be the first reaction of any cultivator.

My calamity is but someone else's dream.

"There are many cultivators who wander the mortal realm. To us, decades pass in the blink of an eye. And to him, your thousands of years are just a few passing clouds."

When Chan Qing saw him falter, he didn't continue but said instead, "Jiang Xianjun, the tea is cold."

"...En."

He put the cup down as his hand fell on the edge of the table, near the basket of chess pieces.

Even though Jiang Yinghe appeared the same as always on the outside, Chan Qing could still sense a hidden sadness within him.

"The fog is heavy." Jiang Yinghe sighed lightly and stood up, walking over to the wooden window where the sound of the rain was clear, "Is the Abbot saying that I won't find love even if I retrieve my passion root, that it would all be a farce?"

Chan Qing was silent for a few moments. The words became stuck in his mouth as he looked at the other's back. It was only some time later that he spoke, "For any action, willingness is reason enough to act."

Jiang Yinghe pushed open the other half of the window. The previously vague and muted sound of the downpour outside rushed into his ears.

One of the orchid's leaves glimmered with rainwater like scattered jewels. It remained distinct even amongst a crowd of its brethren.

"Thank you, Abbot."

The Abbot's willingness to say those words meant he already knew of Jiang Yinghe's decision.

Jiang Yinghe heard the sound of him getting up and leaving. His footstep gradually faded away. In the quiet room, only the sounds of the rain and wind reached his ears, as well as the falling ashes of the lit incense.

However, the peaceful setting only made Jiang Yinghe drift deeper into his thoughts. He recalled the past little by little.

The atmosphere became more and more depressing and silent.

He stared at the orchids under the window for a while before noticing the handful of ants hiding under the rain-soaked leaves.

There was a time when he also thought that he could protect others and shelter them from the rain.

Withdrawing his gaze, he closed the window.

—-

Jiang Yinghe stayed at Lan Ruo Temple for a period of meditation.

During this time, he met with Abbot Chan Qing, as well as many other Buddhist monks and cultivator comrades to discuss the Dao. He seemed to lead a very peaceful life.

But that was only true on the surface.

Devil Baron Jiuying, who had been sweeping the grounds at the Lan Ruo Temple for half a year, sat across from him, painting his eyebrows while muttering, "Losing half my devil core was such a damn shame. If that ancestor didn't have designs on you, we could've unified the cultivation realm under his flag by now."

Jiang Yinghe sat beside him and listened with amusement while flipping through a book. "The Devil King was very fierce that day. Without Chang Ye's interference, a fight between you and I would've been inevitable."

"Hiss..." Jiuying made a mistake again. Throwing the eyebrow stone away, he grumbled, "If you didn't want to fight me, His Majesty wouldn't have treated me like that."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a faint glance. "If not for that encounter, you wouldn't have swept the floor until you started to covet a Buddhist cultivator. Although you have atoned for your wrongs, there is still an inherent difference between your identities."

"What does it matter if he's a monk or not? Isn't this lord also considered a monk since I'm here?" Although Jiuying did wear the robes of a monk, his full body tattoos, devilish aura, and the crack on his forehead where his devil core was extracted showed what he really was. He might be handsome, but it was in a savage and inhumane way.

While this guy swept the floors at Lan Ruo Temple for half a year, he actually fell in love with one of the monks here and insisted on courting him. His efforts to study these makeup products showed his lack of understanding of what beauty meant to a Buddhist cultivator.

Jiang Yinghe's attempts to persuade him were ineffective since the devil seemed to live in a world of his own.

He flipped the page and happened to see something related to the devil race. He asked, "If a cultivator happens to take the Yin-Yang Fruit by mistake and wears a devil core accessory to regulate the balance of their energies, can they one day recover fully with rest and medication?"

Jiuying put his head on his hands to think for a while. His haphazard braid draped over his shoulder as he asked a question in return. "If he's wearing a devil core accessory then sure. But only if it's from a devil with pure yang energy... A devil cultivator's realm drops when their core is removed. In the more serious cases they'll even revert to their original form or worse. What dumbass would let someone cut out their core...?"

He seemed to realize that he was insulting himself as well. Jiuying slyly leaned over and sniffed the ends of Jiang Yinghe's sleeves. "Xianjun—"

A shiver went down Jiang Yinghe's spine. He swept his sleeves towards himself and said, "Say what you want to already."

Jiuying looked up at him. Maybe he had changed for the better after his time at the monastery, or maybe it was just an inherent habit of the demon race, but his voice when pleading seemed uncanny, like a wild beast that had turned into a housecat.

"The Abbot gave the other half of my core to Xianjun, so if Xianjun has no use for it, why not return it to Jiuying?"

The sound of his voice made Jiang Yinghe somewhat nauseous. He didn't know why the same behaviours that Chang Ye exhibited would be so intolerable when it was someone else.

He shifted away and said, "This master has spoken with the Abbot about this, and the Abbot said you are still harbouring impure thoughts. When you repent sincerely, I will naturally return it to you.

The archdevil beside him seemed to deflate sadly. He sat back down with a weary look and was quiet for a moment. "Forget it then. I'm not the only one unhappy these days. I really can't understand how His Majesty fell in love with a righteous cultivator. I would ask but... Someone like Tianhou, who dared to rebel in the Devil God's heyday, to settle the conflicts within our tribes with blood and steel... A valiant and manly hero like that..."

"Cough!" Jiang Yinghe choked on his tea. He couldn't reconcile the words 'valiant and manly' with the Chang Ye he knew. He thumped his chest and said, "Go on..."

Jiuying nodded. "Drink slower. Did you know? Yesterday, Sanqing sent me a letter saying that the devil tribes were running around trying to help His Majesty learn the language of love and how to pursue a righteous cultivator and seek his forgiveness. All the energy that used to be used to wage war amongst themselves is now being used to recover His Majesty's wife."

Jiang Yinghe continued reading, but he was a little distracted. He gave a slightly perfunctory hum of agreement.

"Even if I'm in a Buddhist temple, it's hard for me to escape the fate of being manipulated." Jiuying sobbed for a moment. In just half a year, he's been reduced from a hostile, vicious and wicked devil to this simpleton in front of him. He rummaged around in his sleeve for a while and pulled out a small note. "Look... Okay, what's so good about that book of yours? The Abbot said you're here to relax, so you should try to relax! You can read books anywhere!"

Jiang Yinghe could feel the beginnings of a headache from all his pestering. He had no choice but to put down his book. "You also know that I came here to rest because I sensed my next heavenly tribulation approaching, so can't you leave me be?"

His words were cold, but his temperament was always mellow. Jiuying had confirmed this through gradual testing. He couldn't let go of the half of his core that was in Jiang Yinghe's possession, so he naturally wanted to get closer to him.

Jiang Yinghe took the small note and slowly unfolded it. He saw many immature suggestions written in a child-like scrawl on it. It was obviously a list of ideas that only Jiuying could come up with.

He swept his gaze down and noticed Chang Ye's handwriting at the bottom.

"I made a mistake. I promise I'll never do it again. Can I come to you?"

A kitten's paw print was next to the words like a signature.

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyebrows in surprise. He looked at Jiuying's face. When he couldn't see anything suspicious from his expression, he knew that this silly demon was unwittingly used by Chang Ye as a messenger... His little disciple has always had a mind like a maze and excelled at swindling people until they didn't know left from right.

Jiang Yinghe read the contents and returned it to Jiuying, commenting indifferently, "How underhanded."

Jiuying stared at him, "How can you say that the solutions I wracked my brain for are underhanded? No, you have to compensate me for this slight with the other half of my devil core..."

Before he could finish, a book smacked him on the head. Jiang Yinghe's words were like arctic frost.

"I'm talking about your master." His words trailed off, "His methods are underhanded."

As soon as the words were spoken, Jiang Yinghe could clearly feel the blow that a certain foolish cat suffered. The irritating feelings in his chest settled down.

He had been resting here for a long time, and those three were nearing the limits of their patience. Jiang Yinghe just knew that Chang Ye would be the one that broke first.

The surroundings suddenly became silent.

Before Jiuying had recovered, he heard a soft knock on the door. A small monk's voice rang out clearly.

"Devil Baron, the Abbot has asked you to sweep the backyard."

Jiuying stood up and stretched out the kinks in his back like he was used to this. He said to Jiang Yinghe, "What would Lan Ruo Temple do without me? They even need me to sweep their floors. No wonder everyone says that the most enlightened of cultivators are also the most spoiled..."

Jiang Yinghe rubbed at his temple, "...Just go."

He reasonably suspected that this silly devil had been cooped up too long in the temple and suffered some brain damage, but it was better for people to be a bit silly than to be hostile.

Right after Jiuying left, the little monk peeked in and saw Jiang Yinghe looking at him. He skipped over and pounced into his lap. His voice was soft and sweet. "Jiang Xianjun!"

The little monk seemed to be only four or five years old. His voice was high pitched and his pronunciation was still a bit off, like his mouth was filled with mochi. He appeared more obedient that Chang Ye was as a child.

"I came!" The little monk said with curled eyes, "Jiang Xianjun, teach me how to be an immortal cultivator like you! Shifu doesn't teach me anything, he just makes me do exercises and bring water all day! He doesn't even let me have any candy!"

He was assigned to look after Jiang Yinghe recently. Although that was technically true, it was more for the next generation of the Lan Ruo Temple to acquaint themselves with their elders.

But the little monk really thought that he was 'looking after' him and established a deep and revolutionary friendship with Jiang Yinghe.

"Do you have any more sweets, Xianjun? Kong Jing really wants some!"

The little monk's face was round and so were his eyes. Jiang Yinghe still had some food stored in his personal dimension from feeding the kitten before.

He took out some sweet pastries and instructed the little monk for a while. Little did he know that, on the roof of his room, an abandoned kitten was so furious that all of his fur was standing on end.

The little white cat almost cried out of aggravation. He anxiously stomped and rolled around the roof. He wanted to keep looking, but every second was like drinking aged vinegar.

Wu....

Those things were supposed...supposed to be mine...

He bit his tail to muffle the choking noises coming out of his throat.

The sweet pastries are supposed to be mine, and Shizun as well... How can...how can someone else eat it...

The claws in his paws had worn out a long time ago. He had endured for as long as he could before coming over, and the sharp hooks within had all broken off during his fits of rage.

The white cat licked the blood off his claws so he could be a clean and good kitten, but his Shizun said that 'his methods were underhanded' and didn't want to see him. He even gave the cakes he had prepared for him to other children!!

The cat's ears drooped as he sobbed quietly on the roof in a small heap.

I've been waiting for you, ah... Ye-er will never lie to you again....

But w-why won't you even pet me on the head...?

Author's Corner

Oh Your Majesty, the proud and overbearing Demon King-daren, please cry a bit louder. Mommy can't hear you.

Rain

Sharing is caring. Hehe.

Sahl

So our lovely readers can relax now the truth is out. Extra sweet pastries from Shizun's personal dimension to those who knew or guessed what was going on with our three boys. Now waiting online to see what this Dao Ancestor is like...

Happy New Year's!!

OceanofPDF.com

CH53 - ...SPEAK HUMAN, ALRIGHT? (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

"Although everyone says that Xianjun is as cold as frost, I know that you're actually very nice!"

After finishing the pastry, Kong Jing's eyes narrowed with delight. He couldn't help blurting out, "I like you so, so much!"

The confessions of a child were often short-lived and not to be taken seriously. Jiang Yinghe didn't take it to heart as he asked, "Do you have any homework today?"

"I finished it already." Kong Jing scooted closer and said, "The other day, I heard the Abbot chatting with other people. He mentioned you."

Jiang Yinghe saw how he was eager to share but also hesitant to do so. He didn't admonish him and even played along. "And what did he say?"

Kong Jing was very happy with this response. "The abbot felt that there would be a succession of visits from evil cultivators over the next two days, so he wouldn't be accepting new disciples for now. He said that they were all here for you, Xianjun, so you must be careful..."

Halfway through his speech, he remembered Jiang Xianjun's longstanding reputation as a formidable cultivator. In terms of martial ability, even the Abbot himself might not be his equal. He shifted his tune, "But you're so powerful, so you should be..."

Before Kong Jing could finish, he heard a cat's cry outside the otherwise silent room. The sound was soft and charming, with a loneliness that inspired pity in others.

Just when the little monk was about to look through the window out of the goodness of his heart, Jiang Yinghe stopped the child with one hand and coaxed him to continue his exercises elsewhere.

Jiang Yinghe was the only one left inside to hear the faint sounds coming from beyond the door.

The cat's cries became more and more crestfallen.

As if he hadn't heard a thing, Jiang Yinghe flipped through the pages of the book he had just put down, thinking about his upcoming tribulation. There were three Heavenly Tribulations at the Hollowed Cave stage. This would be his last one.

After all three had passed, his body would be tempered, which left only the test of his mentality. He would return to his true self step by step, purify his Daoist heart, condense his soul, and then ascend to the Half-step Golden Immortal stage to find his path to become one with the Dao.

Jiang Yinghe suddenly raised his eyes. As expected, there was a small white cat sitting on the windowsill. Its round, inky eyes were brimming with tears as its entire body exuded caution and an urge to please. It lightly jumped to the ground.

Jiang Yinghe watched it for a moment without speaking.

The cat stopped at his feet, meowing. Its big, fluffy tail gently rubbing against him a few times.

Jiang Yinghe's gaze sharpened. "A wasted effort."

The little beast at his feet looked at him with widened cat eyes.

"You say that you don't care if I can reciprocate your feelings," Jiang Yinghe spoke casually as he continued to glance at the book. If you judged

based on his appearance, he didn't seem to care the slightest about this matter, "but you're clearly hurt by this. Don't you think that there's a contradiction here?"

After a few moments of silence, the white cat at his feet transformed into a human, only keeping his tail.

Chang Ye was born with a shocking beauty that transcended gender. He was a sight to behold even when he was a distraught mess like now.

He knelt in front of Jiang Yinghe and rested his head on the other's knees. He could sense the faint cold fragrance that had eluded him for so long.

"Ye-er was afraid...afraid that the person that Shizun likes wasn't me."

Jiang Yinghe heard his quiet sobs.

"Shizun already...didn't like me... I always made you angry. But I've really changed! I won't lie to you anymore, so will you forgive me?"

Like a real cat, he revealed a soft and pitiful appearance. His tail, covered with dense, fluffy fur, wrapped around Jiang Yinghe's calf.

"So stop looking at others. Look only at me... Shizun, please look at me..."

Jiang Yinghe closed his book and sighed. He flicked Chang Ye's forehead and asked, "Where are your Shixiongs?"

Chang Ye's eyes brightened before quickly becoming dull. He seemed to find it difficult to accept Shizun finally speaking to him, only to ask about the other two. He sobbed again before whispering, "They came here a long time ago, but they d-didn't come over."

Jiang Yinghe flicked him again. "But you did. How disappointing."

Those dark and watery eyes fixed on him as his disciple climbed into his arms. His voice was utterly soft and pitiful.

"Don't be angry with me anymore... I really won't do it again. I'll protect what Shizun wants to protect from now on..."

How could Jiang Yinghe withstand such a blow? He couldn't bear to hear Chang Ye cry, so he helped wipe away his tears. "Do you really know what you did wrong?"

Chang Ye nuzzled against his fingers and looked at him with big eyes.

"Your mistake was—those two understand that love is a two way street and respect that I need to consent as well. You, on the other hand, could only scheme and plot to trick me into giving away the limited amount of affection and pity I have to offer."

Jiang Yinghe was very calm. There wasn't the slightest hint of anger in his words.

"Chang Ye," he called, "when will you learn that respecting me and getting my consent is the most important thing?"

The red-clothed youth looked blankly at him.

"In your eyes, the people of any race are like ants if they have no use to you." Jiang Yinghe slowly said, "I know that this way of thinking was necessary to survive in the Dark Ages, but if you are to stay by my side, you must learn to stand in the light and to see things differently."

"I don't want to be the only light you can catch from the darkness." Jiang Yinghe took his hand, "I should be the one to pull you out instead. You can't even respect and love me, so how can you do so with other creatures?"

He raised his hand and wiped the tears from the corners of Chang Ye's eyes again, sighing.

"Nevermind. If you still can't understand then I can wait."

He said these words on purpose. Jiang Yinghe got so into his little lecture just now that he almost started on the ideological and moral lessons he had taught in his past life.

The era he had lived in and the basic education he received there were so very removed from Chang Ye. Rome wasn't built in a day. Correcting his way of thinking and character would take time.

Just as Jiang Yinghe withdrew his gaze to finish reading the cultivation novel in his hand, his fingertips were suddenly grasped. He heard the other party's voice.

"But Ye-er can't wait." Chang Ye looked at him with red-rimmed eyes, "I thought that as long as Shizun was around, everything would still be the same as before. But lies can't ever become the truth. They remain buried in your heart where they eat away at you and twist your perspective. Shizun..."

He paused for a moment and before jumping like he had remembered something. As if he was grasping at straws, he asked hoarsely, "Shizun...do you...want to retrieve your passion root?"

Jiang Yinghe remembered the words that Abbot Chan Qing had said to him, that their three souls were one... And that he was nothing more than a trial for the unified soul to overcome... His finger pressed against the bottom of the page as he paused for a moment.

After the silence, there was a quiet agreement.

"...Yes."

Even if this path led to a dead end—

It was the only way to get answers for the three of them, and for himself.

—-

When Chang Ye closed the door, he could still detect the lingering notes of the other's cold fragrance.

He withdrew from the room, feeling like a fire was burning in his lungs. It scorched his cruel and frozen heart that was always ready with a mask.

He closed the door tightly with his palm resting where the two panels met and slowly slid down.

The sound of footsteps came from behind him.

Chang Ye closed his eyes and opened them again. He licked his sharp canines. "Did you come to mock me?"

The person behind him stopped.

"So even little Shidi has times where he can't hold back anymore." Qin Jun raised his eyes, looking surprisingly calm, "You've always been the most favored one over the years."

"To bring up the past again at a time like this, you must really hold a deep grudge against me."

Chang Ye turned around with a cold face. For a split second, his gorgeous features were twisted with madness and sorrow. Then the Devil King Tianhou that existed only in darkness retreated, leaving behind Chang Ye, the Peng Lai disciple who grew up beside his shizun.

"...Where's Li Huanhan?"

"He's right next door to Shizun."

"Up to no good I bet." Chang Ye commented offhandedly, "Tell him that I'm going to go up to the Endless Sky Watchtower to settle an old matter."

What could be more important than matters that were related to Shizun?

Qin Jun leaned against the fenced wall. The dark robe he was wearing was embroidered with many ghostly runes. The dark patterns within the robe periodically showed the waves of the River Styx, spirits wandering the Earth, and even the fires of Hell itself.

"I thought you wouldn't agree so easily." Qin Jun stared at him, "Little Chang Ye-shidi, do you really think so little of your two Shixiongs that your would go there by yourself?"

Chang Ye raised his eyebrows and looked at him, as if he was truly considering it for a moment. He smiled.

"Fine," he's been constantly crying these past few days. Rarely has a smile so sweet and harmless crossed his lips, "since Qin-shixiong is so powerful, you should go first. Ye-er will clean up after you."

"...That was so fake I want to hurl. The mopey you from before was better. Little Chang Ye-shidi, you look too weak to take care of yourself."

Neither was holding back, and it looked like they could continue to argue for another ten years. After a few mutually sarcastic comments, they suddenly stopped as Li Huanhan's stifling demonic aura descended upon them.

Chang Ye looked to the edge of where the demonic energy was emanating from and saw Li Huanhan. He was dressed in black with bloodshot eyes and internal demon patterns pulsating across his body. The strangest thing was actually how he seemed to be having an amicable conversation with the Abbot of Lan Ruo Temple.

The two men walked in their direction from a side corridor. Chan Qing was wearing a robe over his pure white monk's garment. The seal of Buddha adorned his forehead, giving off a sense of detachment unique to Buddhist cultivators. Li Huanhan, who walked in step with him, exuded a completely different feeling.

After reaching the end of their conversation, Chan Qing looked deeply at him and clasped his hands together, nodding his head, "Your Excellency is skilled at considering all the sides of a situation. This one is in awe."

Li Huanhan returned the salute calmly and looked at the two men to the side. "My two shidis have caused trouble for the Abbot."

Since Chan Qing was able to divine their true identities, he also knew that the unified soul was not someone he could interfere with. He only said, "The orchid outside the window was trampled on by the cat."

"He's the most disappointing one." Li Huanhan said, turning to Chang Ye with dark bloodshot eyes, "A beating would serve him well."

Chan Qing was shocked into laughter. Then he asked, "How confident is Benefactor Li in his predictions?"

"Eighty percent sure."

"Goodness." Chan Qing said, "Maybe it's better this way."

He nodded, then walked by the other two fractions of the soul to enter Jiang Yinghe's room.

Outside, the three of them faced off, forming a solid equilateral triangle in between.

The demonic energy continued to exert pressure for a moment. However, it retreated just before angering the other two.

Li Huanhan said indifferently, "I have entrusted the Abbot to keep Shizun busy."

The matter of slaying Hundun would definitely cause great upset across the land. No matter how disappointed Shizun was with them, it was in his nature to worry. It would be impossible to guarantee his safety in a battle between Half-step Golden Immortals, even if he was just watching from the sidelines. Shizun sustaining even the slightest of injuries was unacceptable to him.

Not even if it was an accident.

That's why he took measures so it wouldn't come to that.

Qin Jun stared at him for a moment and said, "You told him about that?"

He was referring to how the two of them believed that Shizun was the reincarnation of the Taichu Sword Saint.

"Yes." Li Huanhan said, "In exchange, he also told me something."

Qin Jun raised his eyebrows and curled his lips, "Let me guess...it's related to the similarities between you and I."

Li Huanhan nodded lightly. He knew that Qin Jun picked up on how their temperaments gradually melded together. It was a passive process that was difficult to perceive, but its presence was undeniable.

Chang Ye was completely left out and lost. The growl of a ferocious beast threatened to erupt from his throat as he watched these two speak in damned riddles. He almost gave in to his instincts, but he couldn't lose face like this. Chang Ye asked patiently, "What are you guys talking about?"

Qin Jun's eyes shifted over and he suddenly asked, "Is he one as well?"

Li Huanhan was silent for a moment. "Yes...I was surprised too."

Chang Ye growled, "...Can't you guys talk like normal humans for once."

The previously equal triangle seemed to suddenly shift into an isosceles triangle, and he was the corner that had been abandoned.

Chang Ye didn't think that he would even be ignored by his rivals one day.

Li Huanhan didn't pay him any attention as he turned to leave. It was Qin Jun who pretended to kindly remind him, "Little Shidi, your tail is out."

The fur on his soft and fragrant tail was all standing on end. It was completely inconsistent with the red-clothed boy's demeanour, like a fucking lie detector.

Chang Ye blinked. "..."

It turned out that cats and their tails were two separate creatures.

___

After Chang Ye left, Jiang Yinghe couldn't finish his book, which was rare for him.

This book was about how to fortify one's cultivation body. As long as he passed his last Heavenly Tribulation, his body would become completely tempered. Then the only thing left would be to face the test of mentality.

He didn't know why, but he had a very bad feeling about this tribulation. Like it would spiral out of his control somehow.

Every tribulation represented an interrogation by the Dao itself, accompanied by strikes of heavenly lightning. The third one was especially important as it represented a crucial turning point in the process of conditioning the body to no longer be affected by the heart. Rather than calling it an interrogation by the Dao itself, it was more apt to describe it as the cultivator facing his own obsessions. It was the first time that their truest selves would be tested.

He could remain calm and steady as always the first two times, but this time...

He found out that his passion root had been removed, that his disciples saw him as more than a shizun, and that the Dao Ancestor had split his own soul... How could he remain calm with all this on his mind?

Jiang Yinghe sighed softly. Just as his thoughts grew complicated again, he heard a knock at the door and the steady footsteps of someone headed his way.

The sandalwood scent often found on Buddhist cultivators drifted over.

He raised his head and saw Chan Qing sit across from him and start setting up a chess board on the small table. He said meaningfully, "The heavens have undergone a great change."

Jiang Yinghe took a glance outside and saw the sky that was clear only a short while ago had suddenly become dark. Steel-grey clouds covered every inch, as if a swift upset had taken place.

He gazed into the distance for a long time, his heart growing more and more uneasy. "The colour of the sky seems unusual."

"The spring orchids are also withering early." Chan Qing said, "In the summer, there are often torrential rains, so it will be a few months yet before we are able to see the orchids again."

A few months was a very short period of time to cultivators.

Jiang Yinghe nodded his head, suppressing the doubts in his heart, and played chess for a while. He suddenly heard calm and gentle words from the one seated opposite him.

"Jiang Xianjun, are you truly angry with them?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't expect a senior like Chan Qing to ask about such things. He hesitated for a moment before saying, "Not really."

He looked at the Abbot's slightly amused gaze and felt a little embarrassed for some reason. He added, "I can't feel those emotions, but I can consider the situation from an observer's perspective. The three of them are also so different from ordinary people as well as each other and myself. Even if the Dao Ancestor is just stirring up a storm within the world that he once created, I still can't..."

"The one believes," Chan Qing said, "that he may have split his soul to meet you. Just like how he is your love tribulation, why can't you be his?"

"...Me?"

Author's Corner

Passion root: Here I come, here I come! With a deafening roar from the sky, Laozi appears in center stage!

Sahl

..."The orchid outside the window was trampled on by the cat."

..."He's the most disappointing one."

😂 😂 😂

Rain

Everyone's dunking on my boi Chang Ye XD

OceanofPDF.com

CH54 - A SACRED BUDDHIST SITE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Sandalwood incense burned in the room.

The dense scent slowly drifted over and intertwined with the cold and faint fragrance of Jiang Yinghe's body.

"Jiang Xianjun should have more confidence in yourself."

Chan Qing handed him a cup of tea. The leaves within had already settled to the bottom, and the froth was scattered across the surface. The turquoise and emerald tea within seemed to glow.

Jiang Yinghe accepted the cup. He slowly clasped its porcelain walls. As he was about to take a sip, there was a sudden thunderclap outside the window.

The sound made his ears ring. The sight of the lightning between the clouds penetrating the sky and shooting to the earth flashed across his gaze.

Jiang Yinghe felt an inexplicable sense of anxiety. This only confirmed his suspicions about how unnatural this weather was. He turned and paused for a moment before carefully asking, "Has any other cultivator recently undergone their tribulation?"

Chan Qing followed his gaze. "No."

Jiang Yinghe still couldn't settle down. How could an ordinary storm make his heart tremble like this? He hesitated for a moment, but he got up and walked to the window in the end. "Abbot..."

Chan Qing said, "With your current state of mind, how will you face the coming days?"

This question broke Jiang Yinghe out of his reverie. He knew that Chan Qing was referring to both the tangible heavenly tribulation and the intangible trial of love. Regardless, his wandering mind made the way forward rather difficult to perceive.

He was silent for a moment to try and collect himself, but then cracks of light blossomed across the jade dome in the distance as it shattered. A deep mauve colour spread across the horizon.

Jiang Yinghe's mind went completely blank. He suddenly realized the source of all his uneasiness and quickly said, "Senior, excuse me for a moment, I have to..."

He paused.

The reason Chan Qing had visited him now became clear, as did what Chang Ye had gone to do after asking that question—he had thought that the three of them didn't get along so their arguments would buy him some time...

"The Golden Immortals are fighting at the Endless Sky Watchtower." Chan Qing looked at him, "Xianjun, please sit down."

He knew it was useless to go there, but he couldn't just sit around doing nothing. After being a Shizun for the past 200 years, his heart ached and his mind was as stubborn as that of an old father. He still felt like he should go to have a look.

"...They only recovered recently." Jiang Yinghe lifted the teacup and silently stared at the surface for a few breaths. He suddenly said, "I'm afraid they'll be injured."

"Injuries are inevitable in swift battles." Chan Qing's words were soothing, "There's no need for you to go."

"...En."

Jiang Yinghe tried to suppress his feelings with a sip of tea. It was still the same one from that day, and it was still as bitter as hell.

Lan Ruo Temple only had two types of tea. The almost tasteless Morushui and this type, whose name he hasn't asked about. It was probably something to do with the bitterness of mortal affairs.

The two sat quietly for a moment. As the atmosphere grew more and more dreary, a bright child's voice suddenly piped up outside the room from the window.

"Jiang Xianjun, do you have anything else to eat—" Kong Jing's voice came closer and closer until a little head peeked up from under the window with dark and shining eyes. They immediately became shocked. Kong Jing stammered out, "A-Abbot..."

Instead of looking at him, Chan Qing simply asked, "What did you feed him?"

"...Some pastries." Jiang Yinghe had the subtle feeling of being caught feeding someone else's child, but he remained calm as he confessed, "Nothing from the mortal realm."

The footsteps of the little monk quietly leaving could be heard from outside. The string of beads in Chan Qing's hand suddenly stopped, and the footsteps also stopped. Kong Jing no longer dared to sneak away.

"This only teaches him to be greedy." Chan Qing closed his eyes, "Please refrain from doing so in the future."

"Of course." Jiang Yinghe was slightly guilty, but his attention was successfully diverted. When he thought about the little monk's thin robes being soaked through in this downpour, he spoke on his behalf, "His cultivation isn't high enough at such a young age. He might catch a cold."

Chan Qing suddenly lifted his eyes and looked at him steadily for a long time with a complex gaze before saying, "No wonder all three fragments of that soul are so devoted to you despite their differences. With a Shizun like you, the same thing would happen with any three people."

Jiang Yinghe felt like he had received a second major blow to his pride as an educator.

"Educated and beautiful, a cold exterior hiding the warmth within." Chan Qing said, "Too gentle to ever give admonishment. Besides evil cultivators, even those of the righteous faction would find it easy to give in to temptation and go astray."

Jiang Yinghe wasn't previously acquainted with Chan Qing. There was a significant difference in age so they hadn't interacted much before. When the other party mentioned this, he subconsciously thought of Xiao Xuanyu.

"If Xianjun kept cats and dogs as pets, they would also develop a similar temperament," Chan Qing mercilessly tore into him, "not to mention humans."

If given three parts of generosity, it was only natural to crave for a fourth. Greed slowly grew like an insidious vine that refused to ever let go... The more intimate the interactions, the more they fanned the flames of delusion and madness.

Jiang Yinghe felt like he was being criticized and humbly asked for advice, "Then how should they be taught according to the Abbot?"

As the two exchanged information about raising and educating the next generation, there was suddenly the lazy roar of a beast, followed by Jiuying's voice.

"Little monk, why are you standing here? This is where Jiang Yinghe's meditating. Did he make you stand here as a..."

The voice continued to get closer. Jiuying's distinctive facial markings gradually came into view. He had a nonchalant look on his face before he

caught sight of who was inside. His words stalled. "...A-Abbot Chan Qing."

Chan Qing nodded his head in acknowledgement, "Devil Baron Jiuying."

"Abbot, I..."

"If the devil baron has no intentions of changing his evil ways, it would be best for you to leave and be free."

Jiuying was immediately frantic. Half of his devil core was still with Jiang Yinghe! Even if he couldn't get it back, the person he liked was still at Lan Ruo Temple! How could he leave just like that?!

"Abbot, I haven't succeeded in redeeming myself yet! Did Kong Jing bother you? No problem, I'll take him away right now and stop him from acting cute with Jiang Xianjun so much! No need to thank me. Sweeping the floors in the temple is especially...um, what's the word...ah! Enlightening!"

He picked up the little monk and left. His demon tattoos were hideous, but there was a bright smile on his face.

The storm raged on. Jiang Yinghe closed the window, saying, "The Abbot had no intention of releasing him, so why did you deliberately say so? You also have no intention of punishing Kong Jing, yet you want to borrow Jiuying's hand."

Chan Qing plucked the string of beads and said, "A degree of order is necessary for growth."

Jiang Yinghe nodded thoughtfully. The three he raised didn't grow up surrounded by any shining moral examples, so he should've tried more methods to guide them so that...

He was completely sidetracked. The worry and anxiety in his heart had just dissipated considerably when he felt an earth-shaking boom of thunder which exploded in his ears.

In the next instant, the roof of the room was ripped open. A behemoth of unimaginable size fell faster than even the raindrops.

Chang Ye's original form was larger than the entirety of Lan Ruo Temple. Even if he were to shrink in size right now, there would only be enough room for his paws in the room. There were wings on his back, and his tail could easily lift the roof off. There were injuries scattered across his body, with drops of red blood dripping from the tip of his tail, diluted by rainwater.

Jiang Yinghe had just closed the window when he saw the roof of this tranquil room get torn into shreds. He was embraced by a large ball of plush.

Tianhou rubbed his furry head and cheeks against him while making low purring noises from his throat. He hid his fangs, but there was still an extremely faint scent of blood on him.

Just before Jiang Yinghe looked at the huge ball of plush in front of him, another pair of hands wrapped around his waist and yanked him away from behind and pressed him right up against one of the corners.

Not a drop of rain was able to stain his lapels.

The smell of blood was now even heavier than before, and Jiang Yinghe didn't have time to ask any questions before he was kissed by Li Huanhan who had a hand wrapped around his waist.

...This is a sacred Buddhist site.

This thought came to Jiang Yinghe's mind, but as soon as he wanted to push him away, he felt something that had been missing slowly enter his body. His partially intangible passion root slowly transferred over with this kiss.

It wasn't integrated when their lips touched, but it was seared into his mind during the deep kiss. His empty and dulled nerves were revitalized, and a formerly empty space was completely filled.

The other person's lips were warm, eager, and tinged with a hint of imperceptible caution. He was restrained and careful at the beginning, but

the desire he had hidden for so long burst out when he felt Jiang Yinghe's resistance lessen.

Everything about Li Huanhan was just too familiar to him. Jiang Yinghe could feel how he was barely holding back. The hand around his waist continued to tighten as teeth lightly grazed against his lips.

The area was definitely red, and maybe even swollen. How was he supposed to face people now?

The wind blew past his ears.

He could finally, finally confirm his own intentions.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand and grabbed Huanhan's collar. He waited until he was out of breath to pull the other's collar apart. He turned away to gasp for air. His voice was slightly hoarse, "Don't go crazy here. This is a monastery."

He was about to faint from such a sudden and intense kiss, but he still remembered that Chan Qing was a monk. How could he be subjected to such a sight?

Li Huanhan raised his head and silently stared at him with blood-red eyes. Then he loosened his grip on his waist a little and said, "Shizun..."

Jiang Yinghe hummed, noting the cloying scent of blood on his body. He gingerly touched the small of his back. As expected, his hand was covered in fresh blood.

To go up against a Half-step Golden Immortal while also protecting the beings below by ending the battle quickly must have been difficult for them. They must have sustained many injuries in the process.

Jiang Yinghe had been with him for so many years, so he was naturally distressed. He wasn't quite used to all these strange and complicated emotions, so all he could discern was a dull ache in his chest, like a piece of ice was stuffed there.

"Is it serious?" Jiang Yinghe looked down at the blood on his fingertips, "Are you hurt on your back?"

"It's a minor wound." Li Huanhan stretched out his fingers and held Jiang Yinghe's hand like he always did, wiping the blood-stained fingers clean with a snow-white silk handkerchief, "No need to worry."

Just as the silk handkerchief was wiping the blood clean, another person's voice came from the side.

"Come on, don't be like this Li Huanhan. Let me see him too..."

A hand drew near and exposed an opening in the barrier Li Huanhan had placed around them. The hand that was somewhat cool slowly clasped Jiang Yinghe's fingertips.

Qin Jun knew that Li Huanhan would rather die than share what was his, but the three of them had just fought together and there was the slightest sliver of camaraderie remaining. That was the only reason this heavenly demon had very reluctantly moved over a bit.

Qin Jun's gray eyes were just like before, they only changed when looking at his Shizun. Everyone else was just the trash of the cultivation world to him. There was some blood on his forehead, but it didn't seem too serious. It's just that he was a little too sticky when he came over.

The wraith's hands were even colder than the heavenly demon's.

But his movements were just as soft. There was a delicate and gentle flair to them.

Qin Jun's fingers caressed his slightly red and swollen lips as he thought about something with an unreadable expression. His temperature grew somewhat colder, but the places where they touched seemed to burn even more.

"He's so excessive, but you're not even angry." Qin Jun was talking about Li Huanhan, "Then can Shizun kiss me too?"

Unlike the temperature of his fingers, Qin Jun's breath was scorchingly hot and inquisitive. There was a bit of a sombre ending to his words.

"...Not even a bit of sweetness for me? Or does Shizun not like the third I represent?" Qin Jun pressed against his ear, his hot breath spilling over the sensitive skin, "Shizun, kiss me."

Although Jiang Yinghe logically knew that they were one person, he still found the current situation overwhelming. Qin Jun tightly interlocked their hands as he leaned in swiftly. His kiss was as light as a falling feather, but it was full of provocation for his rival.

"You have to give everything your all." Qin Jun stopped after touching his lips very lightly. Then, like he was under a spell, he whispered, "You can't give up halfway. That's something Shizun taught us."

How could Jiang Yinghe possibly argue against that?

Just as he was stunned speechless, Qin Jun's body was blocked by Li Huanhan. His eldest disciple wiped his lips with an emotionless look and said, "Don't mind him."

One third, two thirds...

Jiang Yinghe lifted his eyes to look at the huge ball of plush that scooted over. He watched as the last third blocked the rain and wrapped his big, thick tail around his leg.

Jiang Yinghe sighed. "...Don't make a scene. Where's Abbot Chan Qing?"

He turned to the senior at the door, and then at the demolished roof of the room. Feeling quite guilty, he said, "...We'll fix this later."

Chan Qing looked at him for quite some time with a complicated expression. "This isn't an issue, but this one asks that you two restrain yourselves while on Lan Ruo Temple grounds."

Split souls always had to merge eventually, so he addressed them as one person.

Jiang Yinghe carefully mulled over the word "restraint" and felt more and more guilty as he said, "Don't worry senior, I won't affect the temple's tranquility."

Chan Qing stopped speaking, but he still had more to say. Finally, he just sighed, "Just don't let what this one saw that day come to pass."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. "...Although I don't know what the Abbot saw, this junior will be careful."

As soon as he finished speaking, Tianhou slowly shrunk and transformed into a large cat that attached itself to him. Its barbed tongued licked his fingers like a spoiled child.

Jiang Yinghe was licked a few times before he remembered what the Abbot had said about order being necessary for growth. He drew back his fingers and knocked on the big cat's forehead.

"Get smaller."

The big cat looked at him incredulously for a moment with wide eyes, then at Li Huanhan, who was expressionlessly re-wiping Jiang Yinghe's hands, then at Qin Jun, who shamelessly leaned in to whisper to Shizun. It was simply overwhelmed by a great sense of aggravation.

He wept as he turned into a kitten, shuffling over to lie at Jiang Yinghe's feet. His round cat eyes were incessantly leaking tears as he pitifully held his injured tail and silently licked the fur there.

Just as Jiang Yinghe's heart softened a fraction and he went to bend down to pick up Chang Ye, his second disciple cupped his cheeks. Qin Jun's voice was deep and slightly raspy.

"Shizun, he's not seriously injured."

Hundun didn't even hurt Chang Ye much.

Those wounds were from the two of them.

Author's Corner

Chan Qing: Little He, stay safe.

HeHe: .....?

Sahl: Well...that escalated quickly.

OceanofPDF.com

CH55 - I WANT TO BE ON TOP (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe said goodbye to Chan Qing the day the renovation of the room was completed.

He was dressed in pastel-blue cultivator robes whose colour became increasingly faint as it spread downwards. His long hair was tied up with a jade crown and a simple hairpin. A light and cold fragrance could be detected on the edges of his clothes.

He had been like a sharp sword in his youth, but now age had smoothed those jagged edges into something pure and restrained.

Chan Qing looked him up and down for a moment. "There is no need to leave in such a hurry. I've learned a lot from our discussions."

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly and explained, "The Abbot is already in a difficult situation, and my premonition of impending calamity has grown stronger recently. I shouldn't stay at Lan Ruo Temple, lest I become a catalyst for others' tribulations."

Chan Qing's first test of his devotion towards buddhist values was still ongoing. He couldn't easily leave Lan Ruo Temple or fight with others. Although he had the capability, he was powerless in many situations due to those restrictions.

Since Jiang Yinghe said so, Chan Qing didn't try to persuade him otherwise. He knew that Jiang Yinghe was worried about the separation of the Dao

Ancestor's soul, so he reminded the other man, "I once told Xianjun that whether this was a blessing or a curse depended on how you looked at it. If Xianjun is still unsure..."

"That's not the case."

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand, his fingertips slowly covering his heart as he sighed softly, "It's because my heart was moved that I hesitated."

"Amitabha." Chan Qing said, "This one knows what you are afraid of, and perhaps acceptance doesn't necessarily mean making a choice."

He continued, "Sword Saint Taichu, whose teachings and techniques spread across the land, claimed to already have a cultivation partner and never took another. But all the records of later generations wrote that this senior's companion most likely died young because they were nowhere to be found."

While Jiang Yinghe was silently pondering over this, the person across from him said, "Perhaps, Xianjun...your heart was not moved enough."

—-

There was a light drizzle on the day he bid farewell to Lan Ruo Temple as well.

Mid-summer nights are often accompanied by sudden rains, and rainy nights welcome in vivid dreams.

Jiang Yinghe rejected returning to Peng Lai using cultivation techniques. Although a technique or a flying artifact could get them back to the sect within half a day, he instead hired a carriage to take them from the pure land of Buddhism to the mundane world covered by red dust.

He needed time to slowly sort out his thoughts, and more importantly, he had a bad premonition about his upcoming tribulation. Jiang Yinghe planned to enter closed-door cultivation after arriving at Peng Lai, so he

wanted to do a bit of sightseeing in the mortal realm and form a reference for what he could be facing.

The sound of rain muffled his hearing.

When Jiang Yinghe sensed someone approaching, the white kitten had already been sitting there waiting for a long time.

He lifted his head and saw that there was still undried blood on Chang Ye's originally fluffy white tail, staining the tip red. Those watery and round cat eyes looked at him for an instant.

Jiang Yinghe deliberately ignored him and looked down to continue carving runes into the jade slip he held in his hand. When he proceeded onto the next line, he heard an extremely aggrieved and faint cat cry.

The carriage was a bit shaky. It was an ordinary carriage and not one transformed from an artifact. The horse pulling it was also a randomly bought horse that walked very idly.

The pattering of the rain was endless. It would've been difficult to hear the cry without a keen sense of hearing.

Jiang Yinghe's expression didn't change. He remembered how the Abbot said that overindulging disciples did them no favours, so he refused to give in to the urge to pick Ye-er up and continued carving his slip.

A small, snow white paw ever so cautiously approached and patted the hem of Jiang Yinghe's coat.

After getting no reaction from him, the kitty stomped its feet somewhat anxiously and hurried over to brush its body across his leg repeatedly, mewling pitifully the whole time.

...I'm still ignoring him.

Chang Ye was beginning to suspect that Shizun only liked those two and not him anymore.

Now that Shizun had his passion root back, Chang Ye was upset to have not yet received Jiang Yinghe's approval. Then he recalled how Shizun had fed other children pastries back at the temple, and his heart practically pickled itself with all the vinegar.

The kitten sprawled itself across the edge of Jiang Yinghe's clothes and hooked its tail around his ankle. His round black eyes began to water again as he softly meowed a few times. Little meat pads began to crawl up his leg.

...Why won't you look at me?

The little white cat blinked away tears of frustration and forcefully endured it. He crawled up from the edges of Jiang Yinghe's robes and worked hard to worm himself into Shizun's lap.

Jiang Yinghe's hand paused. He came back to himself and swept his eyes over the harmless looking kitten in his arms.

The kitty first found a comfortable place to lie down in his Shizun's arms for a while, but then he couldn't resist the foolish urge to have his fur and tail stroked.

He liked Jiang Yinghe's hand so much. It was as white as frost and shapely, the joints were narrow and slender, and the skin was fair enough to discern the faint blood vessels within. With just one lick, those fingertips would...

The kitten made up its mind and hopefully leaned towards Jiang Yinghe's wrist. It then hooked it with its tail before slowly approaching and rubbing its little head against the surface.

Jiang Yinghe felt the plush and soft sensation on his hand. The tips of the cat's ears swept over his palm repeatedly.

Jiang Yinghe's gaze shifted to the kitten.

Chang Ye rubbed against him like he was up to no good. His tail was wrapped around his wrist as he let out soft mewls, tempting him with the snowy white fur all over his body.

How could Jiang Yinghe be defeated by this kind of temptation? He was an upright, moral, decent man and a teacher as well...

But once couldn't hurt.

Jiang Yinghe put down the jade slip and slowly stroked the kitten's soft and cuddly head as it looked at him expectantly.

The cat was so comfortable that it lay down firmly in his arms. The faint scent of Shizun's body surrounded him, and his long and cool fingertips glided over his back. Finally, the pH of the sea of vinegar in his heart rose.

Jiang Yinghe slowly rubbed his little ears without noticing how the little devil's tail wagged furiously with pleasure. Then the carriage curtain was suddenly lifted.

The sound of rain outside suddenly became louder, then fainter as the curtain rose and fell.

Li Huanhan came in and gave the spoiled cat on Jiang Yinghe's lap a look. He said, "Luo City is in front of us. It is adjacent to the Ying Zhou Sect. We'll be there before dawn tomorrow."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. "Is Jun-er outside?"

"Yes." Li Huanhan seemed to imply something, "Qin Jun said that he saw a cat sneaking in. He was afraid it would scratch Shizun."

Jiang Yinghe understood his meaning and found his childish way of expressing discontent to be rather amusing. He played along, "Then why didn't he stop it?"

"He said," Li Huanhan calmly replaced the tea on the small table, "this cat is so shameless that it would come to you to complain."

The little, white cat lying on Jiang Yinghe's lap snorted. It raised its head to hold the hand that stroked it and began to lick it.

The soft barbs grazed his hand, but it itched more than it hurt.

Jiang Yinghe was about to pull back when he felt his other hand being held as well. He raised his eyes to see Li Huanhan handing over the re-steeped tea into his hand. A familiar scent wafted through the air.

"Blessed Jade Dew." Li Huanhan said.

This was a habit cultivated over the years on Qing Jing Peak. Li Huanhan remembered every single thing his Shizun liked particularly well.

Jiang Yinghe moistened his throat with the tea. As soon as he put the teacup down, he saw how his eldest disciple's gaze never moved from him. He spoke, "Shizun..."

"En?"

Those blood-red eyes gazed at Jiang Yinghe's thin lips that were moistened by the tea, and suddenly came closer. His voice became deeper as his hot breath approached.

"May I kiss you?"

Jiang Yinghe startled. His heart started pounding wildly and his ears reddened.

Li Huanhan didn't get an immediate yes, but he didn't pick up any signs of rejection either. The closer he leaned, the more he could appreciate how confused the other's mind was amidst their gradually mingling and entangling breaths.

After all, Jiang Yinghe had been single for so many years, and had only just confirmed his feelings. A simple question made his ears red enough to drip blood. After a moment of hesitation, Jiang Yinghe looked up and gave him a fleeting kiss.

All the fur on the tail of the white cat stood on end. It jumped up with a yowl, but was immediately pressed back down by Li Huanhan so that it was sandwiched between them.

Jiang Yinghe only intended for a brief contact, but the other person's reflexes were just too swift. In a split second, teeth held his lip and gently chewed on it. Then, a gently probing tongue was sent inside his mouth.

His old injuries were not yet healed, so Jiang Yinghe wanted to push him away and shy back. But Li Huanhan didn't give him any chance and pressed on relentlessly.

Not only were Jiang Yinghe's ears on fire, his mind was also drawing a complete blank. His arms wrapped around the other's neck, but there was nothing he could do about this deep kiss that was tinged with desire that cut off all routes of escape.

...This person looks gentle and warm and easy to talk to. But how, how is he so fierce too.

Jiang Yinghe had no experience when it came to relationships. The few kisses he's had were all initiated by other people. The corners of his eyes slowly reddened until Li Huanhan parted their lips and whispered a reminder, "Shizun, don't forget to breathe."

Jiang Yinghe leaned back and breathed slowly and evenly. He looked at him for a long time with a complicated expression before asking, "How are you so good at this?"

He would definitely be checking later if the Xuehe Demon Lord had any cultivation partners, furnaces or lovers before... Was he known for a sordid history of affairs or short flings...?

Just when this thought surfaced, Li Huanhan returned the favor without retreat. Kissing him gently again, he asked, "Does Shizun want to instruct me on this?"

"...What?"

"Mortal affairs." Those blood red eyes dimmed as he said with a straight face, "So Shizun wants to teach me about the art of lovemaking as well?"

"...That's not—" Halfway through his sentence, Jiang Yinghe suddenly remembered that he didn't necessarily have to be the one bottoming! So what if the other person was apparently an all-powerful split soul? Huanhan was gentle and considerate, Jun-er was so sensible, and even his boisterous little disciple was now just a kitten...

And he could still be considered their elder. So if he was to give guidance of such matters...well it would only make sense if he was the one on top.

Jiang Yinghe spoke with a confidence he didn't know he had after a moment of consideration, "...Maybe one day."

Li Huanhan's finger probed his lips and lightly stroked it. He whispered, "It's red again."

"You say that like you're not the one who made it so."

Jiang Yinghe brushed off his hand and looked to pull Chang Ye, who was about to be crushed into a catcake between them, out. He watched the little white cat gasp and shed tears while he soothed and stroked the kitten's back.

Not only was Chang Ye sandwiched between the two of them, he was also forced to witness his rival kiss his beloved. Because he was afraid of scratching Shizun, he didn't dare to resist. His life was so difficult, and his tears were enough to fill a lake.

The cat whimpered and acted cute, holding Shizun's finger with his paws and not letting go.

"Huanhan." Jiang Yinghe smoothed over the puffy fur of the white cat as he listened to the night rain pattering outside the carriage, "How did you...know?"

He was talking about how their souls used to be one.

"I had a premonition earlier, and it was confirmed by that Buddhist cultivator."

Jiang Yinghe nodded and hesitated before saying, "Premonition? Is it an impending sign of fusion?"

Li Huanhan gently nodded and said, "Qin Jun and I confirmed it with each other. It started when...we began to think of Shizun as more than our teacher."

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. "It's related to me?"

"Yes." Li Huanhan, "As for Chang Ye's portion...perhaps it was separated too long ago, but there's no reaction yet."

The sad kitten opened his eyes as if he had just realized what they were talking about.

Jiang Yinghe nodded and didn't ask any more questions. Then his hand was grasped by the other party. The full force of the heavenly demon's demonic energy radiated off his body in threads.

"Actually...I'm not fine with this."

Jiang Yinghe looked at him in a daze.

"If I'm just a third of the soul of some deity, then my past...means nothing."

Li Huanhan seemed to say these words casually. His tone contained nothing but an extreme calmness, like he was discussing a flower being blown away by the rain and wind tonight.

"But I'm also, in a way, overjoyed."

He clasped the hand that wasn't running through fur and raised it with a strength that was neither too light or too strong.

"Shizun doesn't have to choose anymore. I will always be a part of the only choice." His bright red stare fixed on the other man.

Only when gazing at Jiang Yinghe could one perceive a touching hint of emotion from the still and stagnant pools.

Jiang Yinghe faintly sensed the shard of tenderness hidden beneath the abyss.

"If it wasn't like this, I'm afraid you wouldn't have chosen me." Li Huanhan said, "I've done a lot of things that I regret. I was impulsive, violent, and reckless... I came dangerously close to becoming the very person I swore I would never be."

Li Huanhan lowered his head and very gently kissed the back of Jiang Yinghe's hand.

Just like that night when he had kept watch in the White Crane Jade Manor, his timidity born from a need to cherish and his ever present possessiveness mingled and merged into one.

He was someone who had drowned in darkness a long time ago. His heart had long since been frozen solid.

It was near Shizun that he first felt warmth.

"I'll accept it no matter how reluctant you are." Li Huanhan hugged Jiang Yinghe slowly and pressed his face against his shoulder. His voice was hoarse. "The circumstances of life are ever changing, but I will never leave you."

Jiang Yinghe gradually returned his tight embrace. He made sure to avoid where he was wounded and thought for a moment. "Since I chose you as my disciple, I will take responsibility. And..."

He was actually pretty embarrassed to say such a thing.

"Huanhan is the most gentle person I've ever met." His words trailed off slightly, "Um, actually I..."

Halfway through his words, the Chang Ye that had been squeezed into a catcake between them burst out with all of his newly smoothed fur standing on end again. His meat pads pressed to either side of Shizun's neck as he meowed and leaned in to silence those lips.

...His words were lost in the kitty's kiss.

The little white cat stubbornly kissed him before hanging his body around Jiang Yinghe's shoulders and nestling in his neck. He fiercely bared his teeth at Li Huanhan, but then turned to pamper Shizun by softly kissing his neck and whimpering quietly.

If they really were parts of a singular soul...

Chang Ye quickly processed the information, pushing down all of his negative emotions to find the best advantage of this situation.

...Then no matter what, I will be with Shizun.

The kitten felt self righteous and was just about to continue acting spoiled when his Shixiong picked him up by the scruff of his neck.

"Don't hang off there," Li Huanhan ruthlessly said, "you're too heavy."

The little cat was stunned for a moment. It looked at him incredulously, as if it was very shocked to be referred to as 'heavy'.

—-

Qin Jun had a rough guess about what all the ruckus in the carriage was for.

The surroundings were very quiet when traveling at night, and no formations had been laid on the carriage. The great commotion inside was more than audible.

Because the road wasn't smooth and the horse was just an ordinary horse, he didn't enter the carriage that night.

He didn't enter the carriage at all until they reached Luo City.

The journey was slower than expected, and it was midnight before he reached Luo City. Qin Jun knocked on the carriage door and asked Li Huanhan to come out to replace him.

After a moment, Li Huanhan lifted the curtain and said, "Shizun is asleep. The night wind is cold, so don't get too close yet."

"I know." Qin Jun looked at him, "It's the second half of the journey, so even if it's a summer night you should close the door."

"There's no need. Although the interior is spacious, it's not very well ventilated." Li Huanhan was extremely dissatisfied with this, but because it was Jiang Yinghe who chose the carriage, he didn't say much, "Remember to keep an eye on Chang Ye."

"Tsk." Qin Jun clicked his tongue and didn't respond.

The carriage set off again.

Qin Jun took off his coat and transitioned the coldness from his body to it before sitting next to Jiang Yinghe.

Wraiths had no need for sleep.

That cunning schemer of a cat was nestled in Shizun's arms underneath one of his hands. It looked like it was sleeping soundly as well.

But Qin Jun knew that it was all just an act. The cat's ears twitched the moment he came in, so he had already taken note of his presence.

Qin Jun ignored it and instead sat next to his Shizun. As if by habit or out of boredom, he picked up a strand of Jiang Yinghe's hair that was scattered around his ear.

This was something he had learned from the humans. A couple braiding each other's hair with a strand of the other symbolized marriage and eternal love.

He didn't realize how childish he was being. Instead, he felt very pleased with the meaning behind this action.

He wove a strand of his gray hair into those inky black locks.

Chang Ye didn't move, so Qin Jun didn't bother with him. Just as he was about to finish fiddling with the dark hair in his hands, the person beside him suddenly murmured a few words quietly and shifted positions.

Qin Jun let go of his hair and waited for him to settle down before continuing.

He was so beautiful regardless of the angle. As expected of the person he likes.

This evil spirit trusted his own eyes. He leaned over and heard Jiang Yinghe's vague murmurs like he sensed that Qin Jun was here.

"...Jun-er."

"En." It was a relief that he didn't call Li Huanhan or Chang Ye.

"Let's discuss...I want to be on top..."

Qin Jun was stunned, then laughed dumbly. He stared at that thin white neck and licked his sharp incisors.

What could Shizun be dreaming of to actually say such words?

He leaned over slightly and kissed Shizun's brow, asking quietly, "You want to be on top?"

"...Yes..."

"Sure," Qin Jun continued with a straight face, "but I'll be deep inside you, okay?"

Jiang Yinghe hesitated as he seemed to contemplate this deeply. Actually, he just fell asleep again. It was quite some time before he absentmindedly responded.

"...Okay..."

Author's Corner

HeHe, do you know what you just agreed to? [The worry of a mother]

Rain: Jiang Yinghe will regret saying that very dearly in the future

Sahl: Fans face. Phew! What a way to end a chapter!

OceanofPDF.com

CH56 - I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU STARTED WITHOUT ME (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

When Jiang Yinghe woke up, a pair of snow-white kitten paws were in front of him.

The cat patted the back of his hand and circled around him before lowering its head to lick his fingertips a few times.

Jiang Yinghe drew back his hand and got up to wash before fixing his collar. Just when he wanted to comb his long hair, he discovered a fine knot in it.

Jiang Yinghe turned to Qin Jun, who was holding the kitten by the scruff of its neck. He tried to untie it with his hand but to no avail, so he said, "Jun-er?"

Qin Jun looked up and tossed aside the cat in his hand. He leaned in close to pick up the long strands of hair, letting them fall between his fingers. "Let me do it."

"Don't you think you're a little childish, Patriarch?" Jiang Yinghe helplessly said.

Qin Jun didn't like being called that by him, but at this moment he didn't find it as harsh. The other party's voice was clear, slightly lazy and husky. Like a butterfly, it alighted on before lightly sweeping over his heart.

Qin Jun turned his head to the side while tying his hair to stare at Jiang Yinghe's fair neck. He quietly said, "I always want to do something to you

because Shizun is too good-looking."

Jiang Yinghe startled. Some unhealthy images came to mind, making him cough before saying, "...Then you should continue to be childish. I'm not quite ready to accept such a mature disciple."

A low chuckle reached his ears, and a hot breath spilled slowly onto his neck. The sensation was a little ticklish. Jiang Yinghe allowed him to tidy his hair. Just as he was about to remind Qin Jun about personal space, he was bitten by sharp teeth.

Well, it wasn't really a bite because Qin Jun didn't have any intentions of breaking skin, nor did he want to lick his blood or smell his soul like when they had first met. This was more like he was making a mark, branding Jiang Yinghe's slender neck with an eye-catching hickey.

Jiang Yinghe lifted his hand to touch it, experiencing Qin Jun's deep need to show off and provoke his rivals. He subconsciously adjusted his coat upwards. "Is your horoscope the dog...?"

This kind of softly spoken reproach was more like another kind of indulgence. Qin Jun's heart pounded as he buttoned Jiang Yinghe's collar. He then reached for his slender waist and asked with a smile, "Does Shizun still remember what he said to Jun-er last night?"

Before Jiang Yinghe even started thinking about it, the little white cat next to him pounced over vigilantly and piled into his Shizun's arms.

However, Jiang Yinghe was occupied with recalling if he had spoken last night and didn't catch him in time. So the little cat then rolled all the way down the front of his clothes and narrowly landed on the ground. It pitifully rubbed its tail against the edge of his Shizun's robe.

"...What did I say?" Jiang Yinghe really couldn't remember. He vaguely recalled dreaming of Qing Jing Peak as it had once been last night, with the sound of rain as cranes flew through the sky... He didn't remember what he had promised.

As Qin Jun's arm wrapped around Jiang Yinghe's waist, he took the opportunity to measure the circumference with his hand. He slowly brought this dense wisp of cloud that was like a fragile treasure into his arms.

"Shizun, you said that you want to be on top?"

His reminder jogged Jiang Yinghe's memory. Although he was inexperienced, he had a great imagination. After all, he was a citizen of Earth and a child of China with five thousand years of cultural accumulation! Now that he was in such an inclusive era, he must know more than them, right?"

"Yes." He nodded with an extraordinary seriousness.

Neither of them had a high body temperature; one was a natural-born wraith while the other had an ice cultivation root. Only his chest that was touching Jiang Yinghe's back was scalding hot. The air he exhaled occasionally was also filled with tender warmth

He finished fastening the buttons of the coat.

Qin Jun slightly loosened his grip and said, "Shizun also agreed to one of Jun-er's requests, remember?"

What a rhetorical question. Of course Jiang Yinghe didn't remember.

Jiang Yinghe slotted the long hairpin into the crown embedded with a piece of spiritual jade holding up his hair and waited for Qin Jun to continue.

But the other party wasn't forthcoming. He simply said, "I'll tell you later. You'll be very tired if you do it like that the first time."

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...Very tired?"

"Yeah." Qin Jun's hand paused on his waist and duly withdrew, "It'll hurt your back."

Jiang Yinghe blinked again. "..."

He didn't know what was said yesterday, but he had a very bad feeling about this.

They got off the carriage when they arrived at Luo City.

Luo City was adjacent to the Ying Zhou Sect's compound, but there were also many smaller sects around it. There were fortune tellers and merchants everywhere that all spoke in a mysterious way. They referred to Luo City as a staircase that reached the clouds for those who wished to follow the path of immortal cultivation, because there were often immortals that visited to experience the mortal realm.

But in this kind of place, there were rich merchants who were willing to offer exorbitant sums for the "elixir of immortality". In addition, there were talented people from the Jianghu that entered the city by night to search for immortals, and poor and disabled beggars who came here to try their luck as well...

It was called the 'Cloud Staircase', but it appeared to simply be a normal bustling city. Maybe there were actual cultivators among them, but many of them were just deceitful scam artists.

Evil cultivators were abundant in a chaotic place like this.

When Jiang Yinghe carried the white cat into the inn, there was still a lot of noise in the lobby. But, one by one, the people within fell silent as they caught sight of him.

They looked up, only to fall into a staring stupor.

The person in front of them was in light-colored robes with pine, cypress and bamboo embroidered on the edges. His hair was held in place by a jade crown, and his dark eyes seemed to hold stars within. His skin was as translucent as cold jade, giving off the lustre of frost beneath the moonlight.

His appearance was not the only thing that stunned people. It was the fact that, despite holding a cat in his arms, he still radiated an aloofness that placed him thousands of miles away from others. He was distant and pure

to an extreme degree, like the thin layer of ice that hadn't yet melted on a spring day.

"Which sect is this cultivator from... Could he be a rogue immortal cultivator?"

Someone swallowed dryly, "What a strong aura of immortal energy. Those sect cultivators from a few days ago knew some tricks, but they're nothing compared to him."

"But I think..." the first person who saw him smacked his lips, "although he seems exceptional, he doesn't look particularly strong."

Jiang Yinghe had a subdued air about him, and he had already concealed his cultivation as much as possible to prevent others from being impacted by his impending heavenly tribulation, making it difficult for the mortal eye to perceive the truth.

Only some of the inn's bellhops who were closer to him could sense the faint and cold fragrance of his body.

Li Huanhan had already arranged a room and the innkeeper took him upstairs. Qin Jun would follow later as he went to store the carriage.

Jiang Yinghe acted like he hadn't heard the discussions, but after he had taken a few steps upstairs, he suddenly paused and looked down from the railing.

Those two were still talking animatedly when he looked over.

"... Did you see that person? The temperament of the one just now is similar to that Peng Lai Elder I saw once!"

"Wait." another lowered his voice, "Has the Peng Lai Immortal Sect really come to Luo City to recruit disciples?"

"There's no doubt about it!" the man was very pleased with himself, "This is going to spread like wildfire in the city, truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity..."

Jiang Yinghe stood at the railing for a moment, puzzled.

What branch of Peng Lai are those two from? How come I don't know about my own sect accepting disciples?

Although he seldomly participated in the Peng Lai disciple selections, he knew that most of the disciples accepted were talents educated from a young age from families with a history of cultivation. Others, like Li Huanhan, were orphans brought back by Peng Lai disciples. They had to wait until they started their training before they were officially part of the Sect.

Jiang Yinghe didn't stop too long. He asked the bellhop beside him, "This little brother, do you know what they're saying about the Peng Lai Sect accepting disciples?"

The bellhop was flattered to be called a 'little brother'. He casually said, "They're saying that a Xianjun from Peng Lai Immortal Sect has come to build a temple here and is taking in young boys and girls based on their talent. I don't know where the info came from, but cultivation wannabes are literally fighting to get their children to the temple."

Jiang Yinghe nodded and thanked him.

He was the only Xianjun in Peng Lai, and he didn't eat children. Why would he ask for girls and boys...?

Only an evil cultivator with an ulterior motive would impersonate him to commit crimes... As Jiang Yinghe thought about this, he pushed open the door and immediately saw the infamous heavenly demon who was the leader of the Tian Mo School inside the house organizing books, replacing the tea, and making the bed.

...En. How nefarious.

He almost couldn't help but laugh as he watched, so he reached out and closed the door before turning around, "Huanhan?"

"En?"

"You...do not live up to your title."

Li Huanhan looked up at him, and his hands paused from where they were arranging the books by year. He was silent for a moment, as if he hadn't figured out where he didn't live up to his title. A long while later, he asked, "...How so?"

Jiang Yinghe put down the kitten and walked over to look at the books he was arranging. "Don't you think that you're not acting evil enough?"

Originally, these books were all works from Lan Ling Publishing House. Next to them were a collection of the rumors and news that had circulated the cultivation world over the last century, the most sensational of which was the revival of the Half-step Golden Immortal, which occupied three to five books worth of words.

Jiang Yinghe had a deep impression of this Lan Ling Publishing House. He knew it was nothing good just based on its name. He asked, "What are you doing with these books?"

"This book in particular has become popular in recent years." Li Huanhan's bloodshot eyes were slightly glazed, "It is a tale about the love between a shizun and his disciple."

Before Jiang Yinghe could react, he was affected by the other party's approaching aura. He looked up and realized he was reflected in those vivid red eyes.

"So what should I do," he asked quietly, "to be considered an evil cultivator?"

"...Lie and cheat, be known for bullying the weak and stealing from the poor..." Jiang Yinghe thought about it and added, "Eating young boys and girls."

Li Huanhan frowned, "What's so delicious about boys and girls?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He didn't know what demons considered delicious, so he absentmindedly asked, "Then you evil cultivators—"

"Is it okay to eat you?"

His words came to an abrupt end at his disciple's question.

Jiang Yinghe was at loss for words. Li Huanhan took the opportunity to gently bring their lips together and ask in a hoarse voice, "It's not good to bully the weak, so can I bully my Shizun instead?"

...How can you say it like that?

Jiang Yinghe's ears were burning. He concentrated on calming down, but just as he was about to change the subject to something more serious, his lips were sealed as he was brought into an embrace.

The bloody aura that surrounded Li Huanhan's entire body has never left, it was just hidden at times. During their kiss, it revealed itself in full force.

Sharp teeth scraped along his lips, soothed by the hot, wet press of a tongue as their kiss reached a deeper level of intimacy.

Jiang Yinghe pushed against his shoulder and panted to the side for air. He stuttered, "O-of course not, you..."

He wasn't able to finish his sentence again.

Because the "harmless kitten" behind him had returned to being a large cat at some point. It resembled a snow white Siberian tiger, except the tail was thick and plush. The appendage wrapped itself around Jiang Yinghe's waist and pulled him back while the big cat's tongue forcefully licked his shoulder.

Right over where Jun-er had made the hickey.

This little bastard...

Perhaps it was because they knew of each other's origins, or perhaps the atmosphere was simply too good, but the two insolent, bullying bastards didn't even fight that much amongst themselves. Instead, they worked together in a weird and tacit manner as if they were one person.

...Well, they originally were one person.

Li Huanhan's hand opened Jiang Yinghe's collar with dark eyes the colour of dried blood. His fingertips rubbed the hickey as he leaned close to whisper, "Did Qin Jun do this? It looks like he's the one that's more like an evil cultivator."

Jiang Yinghe pressed on his disciple's shoulder. He felt like he was losing control of the situation.

Just as the situation was getting out of hand, the door creaked.

Jiang Yinghe's entire body stiffened. He could guess what the next rumor in Luo City...no, the entire cultivation world would be already.

That was, until he heard Jun-er's voice.

"Li Huanhan, Chang Ye." Qin Jun closed the door, "Restrain your internal demons and body size. It's time to clean out the Sect's member list.

—-

The so-called cleaning of the Sect's member list was naturally not referring to actual members of Peng Lai.

Just as Jiang Yinghe had thought, this impostor who demanded children in his guise was indeed an evil cultivator.

Since Qin Jun was a wraith, he could sense the proportion of living souls in Luo City and even detect the intensity of resentful energy here. Therefore, he had immediately noticed that there was a ghost cultivator haunting Luo City.

In addition, Jiang Yinghe had heard about the rumor of a 'temple being built for worship'. He was about eighty percent sure that this was a ghost cultivator disguised as an immortal who took advantage of this chaotic place and its ignorant populace to raise his own cultivation.

In order for a ghost cultivator to purify their soul and cleanse their body of miasma, they had to build a temple and rely on the faith of mortals to convert into an immortal cultivator.

So that was the situation.

Jiang Yinghe straightened his clothes and continued, "Since they have set up a place for incense and offerings, we will go to take a look. If they really are beyond salvation...then a swift exorcism would be for the best."

The big cat's tongue was covered in soft barbs. Even if they didn't stand up, it still stung and irritated the skin.

As he spoke, the kitten by his legs simultaneously put on a show.

It stuck to him, acting cute and spoiled, stretching out its squishy paws to hook at his robes in an attempt to gain Shizun's attention.

Jiang Yinghe actually hurt a little after this little bastard licked him so much. He lifted his foot and pushed the kitten away, saying with a grimace, "It seems the only thing you learned from your Shixiong is how to be shameless. Couldn't you have chosen something good instead?"

The little white cat meowed and waved its tail in aggravation. The appendage held onto the corner of his robes.

Jiang Yinghe still remembered how strong this tail was when it grew larger, so he pushed Chang Ye even further away and turned his head. "Why are you less and less reasonable as well..."

Li Huanhan admitted his fault. "When I heard Shizun speak, I couldn't help but... My heart was beating too fast."

A perfect shot flew over unerringly from midcourt.

Jiang Yinghe could almost feel the sound of the ball going into the basket of his heart.

He coughed lightly to hide his embarrassment.

"Three split souls...is still too..." Jiang Yinghe couldn't even picture what it would look like, "Let's wait until the fusion... If afterwards..."

It was like a thorn had pierced his heart.

After the fusion, after overcoming his tribulation, perhaps that person would return to the Endless Sky Watchtower and continue to watch over the world as its guardian.

Jiang Yinghe's thoughts paused here as his mind uncontrollably imagined the most likely ending.

His uncertain mind also drifted to his upcoming heavenly tribulation. He knew now, more than ever, that it was almost upon him... He remained buried in his thoughts for quite some time until he heard Qin Jun's voice.

"You guys went too far just now."

"Right?" Jiang Yinghe nodded gratefully.

"I can't believe you started without me." He continued.

Jiang Yinghe blinked again. "...?"

Author's Corner

The next rumor: The aloof Xianjun is being forced to exercise with many evil cultivators at an inn! Click to view.avi

HeHe: I-I kind of can't accept this QAQ.

Sahl:

Qin Jun: "I can't believe you started without me."

Sahl: *gathers three disciples in a hug* It's so good to see our boys getting along!

OceanofPDF.com

CH57.1 - A MYRIAD OF TWINKLING LIGHTS (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The moonlight shone down like ribbons of gauze.

There was a golden statue depicting an immortal inside the temple, with tributes and incense aplenty at its feet. Amongst those who passed by, there were a few very young children led to pray and offer incense by their parents, who then fought to speak with the cultivator standing to one side of the temple.

Some of them were well-dressed and wealthy merchants, others were clean and tidy scholars with an air of refined learning. But many more were just ordinary people bearing expressions filled with hope.

Most of the crowd had already dispersed by the time Jiang Yinghe arrived, leaving only one or two children who had been left by their parents in the temple. They stood timidly with their heads bowed behind the cultivator.

From Jiang Yinghe's point of view, the cultivator before him had little potential on the path to immortality, but any evil aura was also well concealed. It was enough to temporarily prevent Jiang Yinghe from discerning what path of cultivation he practiced.

Jiang Yinghe didn't have the presence of a cultivator right now, but his appearance and temperament and the little boy holding by his hand still managed to attract the other party's interest. Finally, the man in the cultivator robes couldn't help but call out, "Wait a minute."

Jiang Yinghe paused and said, "Yes?"

The man had originally stopped him because of the boy in red by his side, but as he approached he was captivated by Jiang Yinghe's features as well.

The man's mind blanked instantly as his heart beat out a vigorous rhythm. He vaguely sensed that this was no ordinary person, but he still collected himself and carried on with his scheme. "Is this child yours? From what this one can see, he has great potential as an immortal cultivator."

Jiang Yinghe took a look at Chang Ye, who had turned into a child, and nodded.

This was probably the first person ever to say that the Devil King Tianhou would be a great immortal cultivator.

When the man saw him nod, he began to think of how to persuade both the parent and child to stay. However, before he could say anything, he heard the man in front of him ask, "May I ask which generation of Peng Lai disciples this cultivator is from?"

The man replied without blinking, "The seventeenth generation."

Jiang Yinghe indifferently nodded and added, "Then what about the Xianjun who came to accept disciples, do you know?"

The man had never been asked such a thing before, so he was caught off guard. He wanted to keep up with the charade, but then he realised that not a word could come out of his mouth.

Jiang Yinghe casually made a silencing hand sign and looked away, saying, "Since you don't know, this master will tell you."

At this moment, the surrounding lights and candles suddenly started to flicker and sway despite there being no wind. The man felt his entire body being crushed by an icy-cold aura as he slumped to the ground.

He looked up hastily and saw a sword as white as snow manifest before his eyes. His mind immediately flew to the Xianjun he was impersonating. He

started to beg for mercy, "Your Excellency, please spare me! I was just following orders—"

As he spoke, his cultivator robes degraded into tattered rags. The seemingly refined man degenerated into a subjugated demon in the blink of an eye.

Jiang Yinghe's expression didn't change. The snow sword had already left his hand and plunged into the chest of the demon in front of him like it had a mind of its own. Ice spread through the creature's flesh and veins. In the next moment, its body shattered into fine dust.

Jiang Yinghe withdrew Wangchen and said to Chang Ye, "Go and watch over the children over there."

Then Jiang Yinghe looked up and carefully scrutinized the statue in front of him. He said indifferently, "I sensed that the spirit affixed to the statue suddenly shifted when I stepped into this place. You knew I was coming?"

The next moment, the statue suddenly shattered. The spirit attached to it screamed as it tried to escape, but an unseen force pulled it back into the temple.

Jiang Yinghe looked up to see Qin Jun had captured the spirit from his place atop the temple. He considered this matter settled and was about to withdraw his sword when a woman suddenly spoke from the side of the temple.

"I knew Xianjun would come."

Jiang Yinghe stiffened as the presence of another immortal cultivator made itself known. This person's cultivation emitted a chill similar to his.

"I have been waiting here for a long time, Jiang Xianjun."

...Was she the one directing the demon and spirit?

Jiang Yinghe suddenly had a chilling premonition.

"Immortal comrade, why don't you show yourself."

A clear laugh came from a corner of the temple as she materialized and took a few leisurely steps forward.

"We have not seen each for centuries. How has Xianjun fared?"

"...Li Yue Zhenren?"

The woman from Guang Han Palace standing in front of him was dressed in pale blue gauze and surrounded by a distinctive aura. She had a gentle appearance and a slim body. It was obvious from a glance that she was a Zhenren belonging to the righteous faction.

But Jiang Yinghe felt something was wrong from the way she approached step by step. He looked over and asked, "You...are you undergoing the Lightning Tribulation from Primordial God to Hollowed Cave? What enmity do you and I have for you to do this?"

Li Yue Zhenren looked around at the temple and sighed, "I know that I cannot cross this threshold. My journey to immortality will come to an end here."

"It's just that...a few days ago, I learned precisely from the demons I had subdued that the Demon Lord who once unified the Tian Mo School was also called Li Huanhan." she trailed off and looked at Jiang Yinghe, "My son was defeated by him, and I accepted that he was not as skilled at the time. But now...I've learned that one of Xianjun's peerless genius disciples was just a wayward demon!"

Li Yue Zhenren was on the verge of her tribulation, but she had no intention of facing it. She came here prepared to die.

Jiang Yinghe could guess what she wanted to do.

"Li Yue Zhenren." He gripped Wangchen tightly, "This is Luo City. It is not a part of the cultivation world."

There were 700,000 people living in Luo City. It was a place receptive towards cultivation, and future generations of cultivators would

undoubtedly come from here.

He wanted to remind the other party that, if she were to trigger her Lightning Tribulation here, the storm would tear through this city like it was made of paper and lay waste to all in its path.

"Of course I know that."

As she walked up to Jiang Yinghe, she could feel three dangerous gazes lock onto her. She shifted the whisk in her arms and continued, "Xianjun would take in even a demon, so why not my son? This one wanted to ask her senior, did you know he was an evil cultivator from the start? Did Peng Lai know as well?!"

Jiang Yinghe remained silent. He could sense the despair festering beneath the other's calm demeanour.

"...It seems you are the leader of the Immortal Path only in name." Li Yue Zhenren gritted her teeth.

The sky above Luo City became dark as the moonlight was covered by black, rolling thunderclouds.

Jiang Yinghe could feel his own Lightning Tribulation responding in kind. It was almost out of his control.

"Li Yue," Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath, "You have lived a life of honour and righteousness. Are you really going to disregard 700,000 innocent lives in your final moments?"

"I'd like to ask Senior instead." Li Yue said, "As the foremost sword cultivator, why are you harbouring demons, raising evil cultivators, and refusing actual righteous talents?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't know how to explain it to her.

Ordinary cultivators would find a sparsely populated place to enter seclusion so that others wouldn't be affected even if their Lightning Tribulation went on for a full week. Jiang Yinghe could somehow endure Li

Yue Zhenren's tribulation from Primordial God to Hollowed Cave...but not if his third Hollowed Cave tribulation was triggered as well.

Li Yue stood in place and looked around. Her eyes paused at the roof. "That heavenly demon and your other disciple are up there, right? Tell them to not waste their efforts. Even if that demon lord is really a Half-step Golden Immortal, he is powerless to save you from the Dao."

Jiang Yinghe had not guessed wrong.

The thunderclouds that gathered above Luo City were not only from Li Yue Zhenren's tribulation, but also his own.

His third tribulation had arrived earlier than expected.

The reason Jiang Yinghe bid farewell to Lan Ruo Temple was out of consideration for Abbot Chan Qing's impending test of mentality. Unexpectedly, his tribulation would happen here...

Just before Li Yue finished speaking, a silver longsword ran her through before slamming back into Qin Jun's hands.

The wraith's expression was dark as he descended from the roof. When he tried to approach Jiang Yinghe, he was swept aside by a cold spiritual energy resembling ice and snow.

"The Heavenly Lighting is almost here. Stay away."

Jiang Yinghe sighed as he watched the body of the other immortal turn into ashes.

"Can you three...help me maintain the barrier?"

His words were as calm as ever, but they caused a nauseating chill to run through their stomachs.

"Shizun..."

"Set up the barrier." Jiang Yinghe interrupted him.

Just like what Li Yue Zhenren had said, this was his own Heavenly Tribulation that only he could face. No bystanders could interfere.

Even though Jiang Yinghe was resolute, Chang Ye was still unwilling and almost a little anxious. "What kind of barrier? Your life is the most important thing. Other people are not your responsibility! This time, and last time too... When are you going to..."

...When are you going to put yourself first, Shizun?

If the three of them joined forces, his life wouldn't be in danger even if he couldn't successfully overcome the tribulation, just like what Jiang Yinghe had once done for Qin Jun. However, Shizun only asked them to maintain the barrier and protect the civilians.

What he cherished most, even at this moment, was the weak human race that lived and died like ants. Despite the fact that everyone in this city would be dead in a hundred years' time, their souls crumbling into dust that would be blown away by the wind...

Never before had Chang Ye been so infuriated at someone's capacity for kindness.

But he failed to consider that Qin Jun was just a Golden Core cultivator when Jiang Yinghe helped him. The black thunderclouds above Luo City now were meant for the third tribulation of a cultivator at the Hollowed Cave stage, with enough power to shatter the earth and flood the fragile soil beneath his feet.

It was more than capable of crushing those insignificant and ant-like life forms.

The thunderclouds had already condensed, so it was impossible to change the location anymore.

Chang Ye had no intention of creating a barrier, he only wanted to protect the shizun before him. However, the one he loved sent out waves of spiritual energy to prevent him from approaching. Within a few moments of

this stalemate, a boundary covered with demonic energy rose to encircle the newly built temple.

The statue shattered and the offering platform collapsed. The only human witnesses were a few children cowering outside the boundary and hiding in the corners of the temple.

"Li Huanhan!"

Chang Ye screamed hoarsely as he met a pair of blood-red eyes.

"You're going to listen to him?! Do you want him to die?!!"

Perhaps it was because he was a devil beast, but Chang Ye could sense it better than anyone else.

Based on the slightest changes in Jiang Yinghe's mood, he could glimpse the uneasiness in his shizun's heart, but also the overwhelming courage to put his life on the line.

After all, Jiang Yinghe was a sword cultivator, and they always knew how to do what was necessary.

Li Huanhan's blood-red gaze remained calm and still. He seemed to have no intention of replying to Chang Ye. All of his attention was focused on one person alone.

After Chang Ye finished shouting, another boundary layer covered in miasma went up, suppressing the Heavenly Tribulation even more.

Chang Ye looked at Qin Jun incredulously. His hands were clenched so tightly that his joints began to pop.

Likewise, the wraith said nothing. He only said a simple sentence in a tone as heavy and cold as ice when he felt the Lightning Tribulation begin.

"Chang Ye, barrier."

Chang Ye backhanded a nearby table into smithereens.

He felt like he was going insane. Even after living for so long, he couldn't understand this decision to face life-threatening danger to 'not involve bystanders'. Even more unbelievable, Li Huanhan and Qin Jun were playing along.

His throat let out the hoarse roar of a beast. Blood dripped from his fingers as he slammed his fists into the ground.

Chang Ye swallowed the blood that threatened to come up his throat as he tried to come to terms with Jiang Yinghe's choice and restrain himself from rushing in.

...He struggled to behave like he had promised.

That blood-soaked hand came to a rest on the barrier as the last layer went up, forming an impenetrable boundary.

OceanofPDF.com

CH57.2 - A MYRIAD OF TWINKLING LIGHTS (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

At the same time, purple lightning came crashing down from the thunderclouds that had been brewing for a long time, striking through the already broken temple roof and bringing forth a tremor so violent it was like an explosion.

The bolt split the ground.

The Heavenly Lightning was forcibly triggered and also contained the residual power from Li Yue Zhenren's tribulation. It struck that person, shaking his very core.

Jiang Yinghe half-knelt on the ground, holding onto Wangchen with one hand. His soulbound weapon was shaking violently.

Fresh blood spilled out of the wound caused by the lighting. The viscous liquid slowly soaked into the ground.

It was another rainstorm.

The city that held cultivators in high regard seemed to grow silent tonight.

The thunder rolled.

Rivulets of blood ran down his arms, staining his snow-white clothes, bit by bit.

Jiang Yinghe coughed, braced himself against his sword, and slowly got up.

Then another Heavenly Calamity came crashing down from where the thunderclouds gathered. Lightning flashed across the sky, illuminating the dark skies for a single moment.

The light shone on the moon.

When the thunder roared, more blood slid down Jiang Yinghe's injured back and soaked his body.

Did it hurt?

...Not really.

Jiang Yinghe held the hilt of the sword and watched his blood flow down the blade. He thought of how to get through the last three questions from the Dao that would be the most powerful.

By all rights, he should've been accustomed to tribulations by now. From the moment he stepped onto the path of immortality, he had a realisation—even if he had the talent, he would still encounter hardship sometime in the future.

He had always been in danger of dying without even a corpse left behind.

Torrential rain poured down.

In the midst of the tremendous rain, more lightning cut through the canopy.

Boom—

The boundary that contained the Heavenly Tribulation shook with the sound.

Bit by bit, the bloodstains soaked the ground underneath Jiang Yinghe.

He was like a piece of shattered jade stained with bright red blood, or like a blade hardened with ice, radiating an irresistible, invincible sharpness.

Honed into a divine weapon that was beyond description.

The fourth calamity, then the fifth...

As the last bolt of Heavenly Lightning struck him, Wangchen abruptly shattered. The solid ice molded into a blade snapped in two, the bottom half disappeared into the surrounding rubble.

Blood dripped from his fingertips as well as from the tip of the sword.

There were still the three questions...

Under the relentless assault of lightning, his convictions that had always remained stalwart were pushed to the breaking point.

Boom—

In the midst of the storm, the Dao's questions penetrated his mind.

—Why are you hesitating?

Why?

He has always followed the rules of the Dao without hesitation.

Jiang Yinghe spat out a mouthful of fresh blood. He wiped the remaining traces from his lips.

Ever since he decided to become a cultivator, he's given it his all. When had he hesitated?

He heard the sound of thunder, the crumbling roof, and the howling wind.

The eighth strike of Heavenly Lightning was coming.

—Why are you hesitating?

Why?

He has always remained true to himself and advocated for the rights of all living beings. When had he hesitated?

Before the voice in his head could ask again, Jiang Yinghe had already realised the answer. He had never strayed from his path, unchanged since the start.

At this time, his previously snow white shirt had already been dyed thoroughly with fresh blood. The lightning coursing through his veins seemed to numb his fingertips and break all his jade-like bones.

The broken sword continued to howl.

Jiang Yinghe plunged the remaining half of Wangchen into the ground as he attempted to rise. The final bolt of Heavenly Lightning struck him then with the same, unchanged question.

—Why are you hesitating?

Why...

The first questioned his conviction, the second his morals, and the third...

His heart.

He was crushed back to the ground by the question. His vision was filled with the scattered traces of his blood and the cracked ground. The appearance of those around him flashed through his mind.

Why did he hesitate...

Was it to preserve his reputation, to maintain the status quo between good and evil, or was it out of fear that it was all just a dream, that his feelings would no longer be returned after the split souls fused?

I might become just a footnote in someone else's journey, an afterthought. That person who created the world had a life of his own above the Endless Sky Watchtower...

Would he really...leave it all behind to...

His heart, his sincere and innermost feelings, dripped out drop by drop...

Jiang Yinghe smelled an extremely cloying and thick metallic scent as this question drilled into his foundation, threatening to splinter his soul.

At this moment, the barrier that contained the Heavenly Lighting suddenly weakened. An incomparably large beast returned to its original form and rushed into the boundary, covering Jiang Yinghe's body and blocking the lightning bolts that rained down everywhere and sheltering him from the storm.

Tianhou wrapped him in its embrace, but it was too late. Even without the last bolt of Heavenly Lightning eating away at his body, the Dao's last question had already drilled into his heart and started to destroy him from the inside out.

In the next instant, the gigantic form of Tianhou disappeared. A red-clothed boy hugged Jiang Yinghe tightly and kissed his bloodstained lips.

A pitch black half mask was in front of Jiang Yinghe's eyes. The other half was Chang Ye's astoundingly beautiful face. He licked and bit at Jiang Yinghe's lips, but in the midst of the kiss, he spat out his devil core and split it in two, sending half in between Jiang Yinghe's lips.

...Is he crazy?

The core of devils was equivalent to the golden core or nascent soul of cultivators, like a second life. A slight injury would result in a regression of cultivation, while more thorough damage would return them to their original form...

But Jiang Yinghe didn't have the strength to struggle. His soul was shattering, and he could only passively endure half the devil core melding with his foundation.

Jiang Yinghe forcefully clenched his fingers around Chang Ye's shoulders and quietly said, "...It's useless..."

Why did he hesitate...

He didn't know the answer to that.

There was no solution, no way around, and no escape.

Just as Jiang Yinghe lost consciousness, he heard a brief notification from the system in a daze. But he could no longer think. All he could feel was the ever approaching darkness as his soul dissipated...

The souls of those who fell from Heavenly Lightning would all become spirits and return to Heaven and Earth. Perhaps he would return on a rainy night as well.

Just as his consciousness was sinking, Chang Ye was viciously ripped from his side. Another stream of energy entered his body, enveloping Jiang Yinghe's hemorrhaging soul—

And recondensing it.

The demonic energy in Li Huanhan's hand rolled and boiled, suppressing all the remnants of the Lightning Tribulation before contracting the barrier to surround his Shizun instead.

"Still spacing out?" Qin Jun's voice came from behind him, hoarse and barely above a whisper, "Protect him as he reincarnates."

Each of those five words drained Chang Ye's mental and emotional strength.

He jolted to attention. From the sea of despair in his mind, he discovered a trace of hope.

He watched as half of his devil core melded into the spirit that slowly solidified in front of him before leaving to join the cycle.

Chang Ye stared dumbly as the condensed spirit slowly left his sight.

Only the sounds of the incessant rain interrupted the silence.

It took some time before Chang Ye's quiet and hoarse voice could be heard.

"Reincarnated people...will they still have their memories?"

"They'll be able to remember with some help." Qin Jun said.

"When...can we meet him again?"

"...I don't know."

"So will he, will he still like me?"

"Has Shizun ever liked you?"

It was quiet again.

The rain washed away the blood, and the body had already dissipated.

Chang Ye watched as Li Huanhan picked up the broken halves of Wangchen.

His own heart seemed to break in two as well.

Chang Ye stood up without saying a word and disappeared into the pouring rain.

No one stopped him.

Li Huanhan lowered his head to wipe clean the broken sword. The force he used was very light, but because his hand was too unsteady, the blade still cut into his fingers.

Beads of blood oozed out bit by bit, merging in with the sword.

Li Huanhan paused. Only after a long while did he raise his head and ask, "Those kids in the corner..."

"Not dead."

"...That's good."

Li Huanhan wrapped the shattered sword with a cloth and looked down. "Otherwise, he would have blamed me."

With that, the barrier that contained the Heavenly Tribulation completely dissipated. Only broken walls, bloodstains, and the sobbing cries of children remained.

—-

Tonight was Luo City's Lantern Festival.

The day before, a heavy rain fell in the middle of the night, shattering the Immortal's temple in the west of the city. Every household closed their doors and windows for half a night before realizing that the rain had stopped. There were concerns that the weather would affect the Lantern Festival, but there was an exceptionally bright moon in the sky tonight.

It was as if the city had not been affected at all by the storm. In the eyes of many people, it was just an ordinary and unremarkable downpour. The only thing of note was the ruined temple.

Of the 700,000 people living in Luo City, not one was killed or injured.

Chang Ye woke up in a small, unoccupied attic.

He'd split his devil core, so his cultivation dropped several levels. He wasn't sure when exactly, but he had reverted to the form of a cat some time ago and slept deeply here for an entire day.

He regained his human form and sat on the small building, looking down at the city full of bright and shifting lanterns.

Vendors shouted and visitors shuttled about in this city filled with the red dust of mortal affairs.

A myriad of twinkling lights glittered below, keeping the darkness at bay.

Chang Ye laid on his back for a while. At that moment, he seemed to understand exactly what his Shizun was protecting.

He closed his eyes and turned back into a white cat, flicking his fluffy tail. His body was drenched with rainwater, mud, dust, and flecks of blood.

The kitten settled down in a corner sheltered from the night breeze, like a pet that was suddenly abandoned.

...I did what you told me to do.

So please Shizun...please don't leave me behind...

Author's Corner:

Ye-er, Shizun's gone.

It's time for you to grow up.

Sahl:

Earlier... * Jiang Yinghe casually sends the Devil King Tianhou to babysit kids.*

Later... Three layers of awesomeness or 'How to Be Good Husbands.'

(I'm not crying, you are.)

OceanofPDF.com

CH58 - MID SPRING COLD DEW (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Peng Lai Sect...

A candle burned in the palace.

Its light slowly wavered, dragging out heavy shadows from the surroundings.

The person beside Yan Caiwei had to call out to her twice before she hastily withdrew her gaze from those shadows and responded. "Shixiong."

A moment before, one of the soul lamps stored in Peng Lai was extinguished. The corresponding fate plate had also shattered.

The white cranes on Qing Jing Peak wandered incessantly. Their cries shrill enough to pierce through the clouds, reflecting an endless despair.

Yan Caiwei nodded, but her mind was thousands of miles away. "I will go to investigate... Jiang-shidi must have had his reasons for undergoing his tribulation in Luo City."

She pushed against the armrests of her seat to get up. Her thoughts were still sluggish as she struggled to accept the reality before her. The full force of the pain had not hit her yet.

Yan Caiwei brushed a hand over the bell artifact at her waist before meeting Zhou Zhengping's eyes again.

There was a deep fatigue in the lines of Zhangmen-shixiong's face. He was like an unmoving statue. His whisk laid neglected on the table, its colour cold and desolate.

A heavy air hung over the usually bright and open Peng Lai Main Palace. An invisible pressure weighed on the hearts of those within.

In the following moment, dark, rolling clouds covered the previously clear sky outside. A lone figure descended from them and stepped into the palace.

Yan Caiwei stepped forward and looked at the approaching visitor.

Li Huanhan was still in his customary black robes that radiated darkness like a moonless night. Behind him was a long cloak lined with scarlet.

The cloak was stained with fresh blood that left traces on the palace floor.

Under Yan Caiwei's gaze, he walked to the table and placed a silk wrapped object next to the whisk by Zhou Zhengping's hand.

In the compelling silence, only Yan Caiwei's quiet and emotionless voice was heard.

"What is this?"

She watched as the man unfolded the plain, white silk to reveal the two fragments of a shattered sword within.

Wangchen was made of the hardest ice. It was only thanks to Jiang Yinghe that its edge became honed and its name spread throughout the world. Now it was nothing more than two cracked pieces of ice.

The hard ice hadn't completely melted yet, but faint traces of moisture could already be seen beading on its surface.

The sight of the shattered sword seemed to cause something within Zhou Zhengping to break. Finally moving, he coughed out a mouthful of fresh blood that had accumulated in between his organs. Yan Caiwei quickly supported him by the arm.

Zhou Zhengping looked up and watched as Li Huanhan took out the sword pendant that had once been on Wangchen and tied it to the sword again.

A mockery of what had once been flashed before his eyes.

This was his shidi's heavenly tribulation as well as his love tribulation.

Zhou Zhengping closed his eyes. He heard Li Huanhan's slight whisper.

"We protected him as he reincarnated." He lowered his head. His tone was devoid of any emotions, but it gave others a sinking feeling in their gut.

"I will find him... Sect Master, please return Wangchen to the White Crane Jade Manor."

After Li Huanhan's words trailed off, Zhou Zhengping looked at him for a long time before nodding silently.

He watched as Li Huanhan left and took a moment to collect himself before saying to Yan Caiwei, "Ring the bell."

Yan Caiwei was startled. She immediately argued, "Since Shidi may yet reincarnate, there is no need to ring the bell... He will still return to Peng Lai!"

"En." Zhou Zhengping said, "Ring it twelve times then."

According to the customs of Peng Lai, ringing the bell eleven times signified the fall of a Xianjun. Ringing it twelve times meant that one of the sect elders had entered closed door cultivation.

Yan Caiwei was once again taken aback. Then she nodded as relief spread through her. She spoke no more.

The Peng Lai bell chimed twelve times, the sound resounding throughout the entire cultivation world. All the people in charge of the various sects now thought Jiang Yinghe was distancing himself to further his cultivation.

The River Styx in the Underworld gushed as countless ghosts rushed to the opposite bank. The ferryman in a straw raincoat pointed out a pleasure boat floating by to the ghostly maiden beside him. He told her that their Patriarch resided there.

Wanyao City was still bustling with activity. A snow fox from the Frozen Plains, Xue Qianqian, stopped by the market to listen to the wondrous tales of a deer demon merchant. One of which was about their omnipotent King and his beautiful rabbit devil companion.

At the Tian Mo School, the black snake coiled at the side of the Blood Pond opened its bloodshot eyes. Something compelled it to look up, but all it could see was a dense curtain of pearls and jades.

The chanting of sutras at Lan Ruo Temple never stopped day in and day out until the moment when the bell rang. The little monk, Kong Jing sat opposite Chan Qing copying sutras when he saw the beads circling in the Abbot's hand suddenly still.

"Abbot?" The little monk's dark, round eyes widened, "What's wrong?"

Chan Qing was silent for a moment. He shook his head without saying a word.

—-

Three hundred and seventy-five years later...

Jinghua, Prince Rui's Manor...

Neatly dressed maids shuffled to and fro. The scent of incense slowly wafted from the small furnace to fill the room with a soft fragrance.

A maid with her hair in a snake tail closed the door and quirked her lips to her fellow maids. She walked a little further away before saying, "His Highness Prince Rui is still feverish. He's just laid down to rest after taking his medicine, so you should all move further away so as to not disturb him."

The little girls nodded obediently and left. Satisfied, the first maid also started to leave. However, she only took two steps before she heard the door creak open.

She turned around and caught a glimpse of a furry, snow-white cat tail.

"His Highness' cat must've gone in." She thought as she closed the door once again.

The space within was strongly perfumed with camphor incense which held the smell of medicine.

The little white cat took a few steps forward and licked its paws before jumping onto the bed. It stretched and laid down on a corner of the quilt as its tail caressed the long, scattered strands of hair belonging to the man resting there.

His hair was dark and soft, a stark contrast to the pale quilt it was arranged across.

After being unceremoniously woken up by this kitten, Jiang Yinghe slowly gathered it into his arms. His feverish cheek pressed against the soft and fuzzy cat ears as he whispered, "I'm tired. Don't fuss anymore."

The little white cat stared at him with its dark eyes as it lounged against him. After a moment, the kitten nuzzled against his ear. The affectionate action raised the temperature of their surroundings.

Jiang Yinghe's mind was muddled due to his fever. He seemed to suddenly hear a quiet, yet pleasant voice. "Are you sick? Your body is burning."

"Of course I'm sick." Jiang Yinghe thought with his eyes closed. He was the youngest brother of the current emperor. If he wasn't constantly sick, he would've been killed already in the brutal power struggles of the palace.

"Don't rub against me..." he quietly murmured, "I'm so sleepy after taking my medicine..."

Something seemed to lightly brush past his ear. Jiang Yinghe could hear the wavering restraint in the other person's careful words.

"Do you want...to leave here?"

...Leave here? By faking my own death? That was already part of my plans.

Jiang Yinghe fell into a daze as he considered this. He slowly opened his eyes a crack, only to suddenly jerk awake as he saw the other person in the room.

In his bed was a youth completely dressed in red with a mask covering half his face. The other half was a flawless and beautiful masterpiece. A pair of cat ears adorned his head while a thick, yet soft tail was wrapped around Jiang Yinghe's waist. The youth was currently staring at him with bright eyes and a smile that slightly revealed his sharp canines.

...Where did my cat go?

Where did the cat that was about this big and this wide that I just put here go?

Jiang Yinghe's mind went blank. He struggled to keep a straight face as he asked with all the calm he could muster. "And you are...?"

"I'm a devil." Chang Ye didn't even blink.

...How forthcoming. I didn't even get a chance to ask what you are.

While Jiang Yinghe was still reeling from current events, the red-clothed youth brushed his fingers across the seal on his own forehead and quietly said, "What do I need to do for you to remember me?"

There was a faint cinnabar birthmark that resembled a flowing cloud between Jiang Yinghe's eyebrows. It was the reason he was so doted upon by the previous emperor and empress when they were still alive. They had even considered making him the crown prince.

But he had no desire to fight for the throne. That was all in the past anyway.

The question struck something deep within Jiang Yinghe. Something without shape or form chaotically circled the most vulnerable part of his heart.

At the same time, the system that had accompanied him since birth...no, since transmigrating, suddenly lit up with a notification.

[Target acquired—The Little Jiang Purification System is at your service.]

The Little Jiang Purification System... It sounded like a program that cleaned up pornography and illegal activities. But this was the first time in all these years that Jiang Yinghe had seen it pop out like this.

The system repeated its purpose to him every year, something about purifying and merging the broken fragments of a capture target. It also came with a blackened status bar.

The status bar of the red-clothed youth in front of him was only half filled.

Jiang Yinghe didn't know whether to ponder the sudden change in his worldview or scream for help as the person in front of him came closer.

The other party's lips gradually approached in this brief moment of hesitation.

Jiang Yinghe blankly stared at him. Surprisingly, his first reaction wasn't to push this person away when their lips inevitably touched. His heart, which had been beating wildly for a while, appeared to still as their kiss grew deeper. Something stirred in his subconsciousness.

The half of the demon core in his body suddenly reacted to its counterpart, the combined force of which seemed to break through a barrier. Jiang Yinghe's originally calm and consistent thoughts began to unravel as memory fragments rose to the surface and flooded his mind.

He held onto Chang Ye's shoulders as the white cat turned devil pressed him into the bed while kissing him. But that wasn't even the most astonishing

thing. Rather, it was the blurred memories that seemed to come to life for a moment during the kiss.

The corners of Jiang Yinghe's eyes reddened as the lack of oxygen began to take its toll. When he was on the cusp of suffocation, the other person suddenly parted their lips.

He looked at the youth with cool and clear eyes that seemed to glow with hidden starlight. His eyes were rimmed with red and his breathing was unsettled.

In his empty soul that was adrift, a question seemed to come from far away.

His eyes shook as he whispered, "Ye-er?"

Chang Ye's entire body jerked.

"Do you remember me?"

His subconscious mind only surfaced for a moment. Jiang Yinghe rubbed his temples and pondered this. "A bit... It's still quite blurry."

His memory ended at the moment of his death when he was struck by lightning. As a result, his recollections also stopped there.

Damn, all he could think about right now was getting struck by lightning. Just what did he do to deserve a death like that?

Most people would need quite a bit of time to accept this revelation, but luckily Jiang Yinghe had been indoctrinated since birth about shocking things like transmigration and the system. He was still surprised at remembering his previous life, but it didn't bother him as much as it could have.

More importantly, if he really had reincarnated, why did he still have his memories of Earth before he transmigrated? Were those like protected files unaffected by reformatting?

His mind drifted as he considered this. He only saw the almost hilariously careful way the other person gazed at him when he looked up again. The white cat had looked at him this way during their first meeting as well.

"Ye-er." The affectionate nickname now rolled off his tongue easily.

Not unlike when he first met the white cat, Jiang Yinghe tapped on his forehead again. "Are we...cultivation partners?"

That portion of his memories were too muddled. The only thing that remained clear was his sincere and pure feeling towards each of them. Yes, there were three of 'them'... Jiang Yinghe gradually started accepting this new influx of information. He felt his mind being slowly purified as the dust from his time in the mortal realm was swept away.

Chang Ye froze and stared at his shizun.

Hazy light reflected off his long hair. The customary aloofness in his eyes was still there, but he seemed to have come out of his isolated shell in the years he spent in the mortal realm, revealing a heart bursting with gentle and pure intentions within.

It reminded Chang Ye of the cold drops of dew on a white plum blossom when the snow started to melt with the arrival of spring.

Despite this person spending decades in the mortal realm, Chang Ye felt Jiang Yinghe was even more crystal clear than before.

Chang Ye covered where his heart lay as countless voices rang in his ears—This was a good opportunity. If he said yes, they would become genuine cultivation partners.

The him of the past would never let go of such a chance.

But behind these scattered voices, Chang Ye heard his own heartbeat as it calmed into a steady rhythm.

"No," He leaned in for another kiss. "you are my shizun."

He was becoming more and more similar to the other two. Even this calm and measured response was...

Who would've thought that even a devil beast with an inherently greedy nature could one day learn to love and cherish another?

Chang Ye laughed at himself, but he hugged Jiang Yinghe close and buried his head in the other person's shoulder. That fuzzy tail wrapped around his waist and constantly wriggled around intimately.

Jaing Yinghe couldn't find it in him to be angry with this shape shifting little kitten that had kissed him twice and hugged him. He even hugged back without thinking about it, stroking the other person's back in a habitual manner.

It was a comforting gesture.

It was his ever constant gentleness.

Chang Ye endured and endured, but he was still overwhelmed by the sourness in his heart. He tried to muffled his crying by burrowing into Jiang Yinghe's shoulder, but his warm tears still soaked through the other person's thin garment.

"I missed you so much."

He couldn't help but be petulant and act cute like he used to, but now his act lacked even the slightest hint of deception. Every word was branded into his heart again and again and again, until it was almost carved into his soul itself.

"Ye-er really missed Shizun... You w-were too small before so I didn't want to scare you, but I—I..."

Chang Ye couldn't say anymore. He just tightened his hold.

"Shizun, let's leave this place. Isn't that something you've always wanted to do? How much have you remembered?"

Jiang Yinghe actually didn't remember much. The finer details seemed to elude him like they were obscured underwater beyond the reflections of light off the waves. Only the moment of his death from the lightning was extraordinarily clear, as was the moment after the Lightning Tribulation when the giant beast morphed into a person and gave him half his devil core.

Hmph. And here he thought he was raising a kitten.

Like he had done a thousand times before, Jiang Yinghe stroked Chang Ye's soft hair as he became immersed in his thoughts.

"I don't remember much... This might take a while."

He also remembered that this purification system went by a different name before??

As Jiang Yinghe reflected on this, the red-clothed youth leaned down and pressed a hand to his cheek. His voice was tinged with concern. "You're still burning up. We should hurry back to Peng Lai. Based on my experience, cultivating to your previous level should be very quick..."

But it was also easy to make the same mistakes.

Just like the three of them. Even after regaining their former power and cultivating to this day, they still haven't found a way to reach the Dao. Perhaps them being parts of the same soul disqualified them.

Shizun was the same. He needed to face his true feelings head-on to withstand the Dao's questioning and break through.

The reaction of the two halves of Chang Ye's devil core had cleansed the sickness in Jiang Yinghe's body. The remnants of his fever were nothing much. His disciple was just overly worried.

Chang Ye kissed his eyelashes. "Shizun, rest for a while... Ye-er will keep you company."

Author's Corner

HeHe: Petitioning to have the Heavenly Lightning grant me a super VIP account.

The Dao: Denied.

Going to update at 9:00am from now on. Or else I can't sleep after reading hateful comments at night. I have a heart made of glass okay QAQ

Rain

Yay our MC returned from the dead. Now his disciples won't destroy the world lol.

Sahl

Our little Ye-er is all grown up! Can't wait for the other two to see their Shizun!

OceanofPDF.com

CH59 - LITTLE SELLOUT EXPERT (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Three days later...

It was easier to leave the capital with Chang Ye's assistance than expected. Free of the scandalous title of His Highness Prince Rui, Jiang Yinghe felt both his body and mind relax.

The royal family and all the earthly attachments that came with it had trapped him here, like a cage.

In addition, another problem was the memories that flashed past in his mind from time to time. Some were vague and unclear, but the majority were crystal clear. More pleasant memories gradually awakened as he spent time with Chang Ye.

But he still didn't understand this unification system. He also felt that there was something important that he had overlooked, as if he actually had more than one disciple...

Jiang Yinghe contemplated this under the bright moon in the sky. The giant eagle they were travelling on stopped at Chang Ye's command. It kept to itself as it rested to the side.

"Shizun," Chang Ye gathered the hair that fell to his temples, "your body isn't suited to long periods of travel. Why don't we rest for a while?"

This body was still mortal. Even though Jiang Yinghe's soul was condensed to an incredible degree, he was unable to exert his true strength now. That

would have to wait until he returned to Peng Lai and rebuilt his foundation.

Although he had studied the teachings of Peng Lai, Chang Ye was still a devil at heart. All he could think about when training under Shizun was how beautiful he was... That was why he was hesitant to teach him now. What if he did something wrong? No need to mention the other two-thirds, even his usually kind Peng Lai shishus would probably skin him alive if he tried to impart knowledge to Shizun.

Jiang Yinghe followed suit and tidied his hair as well. He did indeed feel a headache coming on from being exposed to the cold wind for so long, so he nodded in response.

This was the most vulnerable he had even been since he started cultivating, but he didn't act like it. Instead, it was Chang Ye who tiptoed around him.

The two of them rested in the town surrounding the He Huan Sect. Jiang Yinghe read some books related to the cultivation world in his room, while Chang Ye changed back to his cat form and with dark eyes fixed on Shizun laid down next to the candle.

The moonlight shone down in water-like ripples.

The cool air of early spring was still present. Jiang Yinghe wore a soft fur cloak that was on the thicker side to stave off the chill. He only managed to get through two or three lines of his book before a fluffy tail hooked his fingers.

His hand absentmindedly closed over the cat's tail as his fingers rubbed it. The tail immediately retreated as if it had been electrocuted, but it returned in the next instant, intimately caressing the back of his hand.

Jiang Yinghe didn't know what he had done yet.

He was busy puzzling out the locations of the various sects in the cultivation world. The blurry memories in his head slowly filled in the missing pieces.

He devoted all of his attention to remembering, so he was completely unaware of what he was rubbing. It would be a shame not to rub the fluffy bundle by his hand, especially since it felt so soft...

Until he heard a raspy cat mewl.

...En?

Jiang Yinghe lifted his eyes to see the little white cat that had been obediently lying down staring at him. Those eyes showed an almost feral desire. The kitten's sharp canines peeked out as he licked them with his barbed tongue.

...What did he want?

It was a moment before Jiang Yinghe remembered that the transition from winter and spring to spring was when cats went into heat.

"Aren't you..." he paused to consider his words, "Aren't you Tianhou?"

He wasn't really a cat...?

The kitten in front of him tilted its head and looked at him before nuzzling his hand with his soft, fluffy chin. Jiang Yinghe couldn't resist. His hand reflexively rose to pat him before he remembered the need to act stern.

...He didn't recall Chang Ye ever going into heat in his fuzzy and chaotic memories. The only thing he remembered was that big fluffy tail circling around his waist and immobilizing him.

Jiang Yinghe was still thinking when the cat's barbed tongue licked his fingertip. The sensation was akin to sandpaper... His instincts warned him too late.

In the next instant, the good little white cat by the table grew big and pounced on him, sending them both to the floor. Snow white fur covered his entire body. That big tail wagged a few times before circling Jiang Yinghe's waist again.

"...Ye-er?" He whispered.

His words seemed to further excite this big cat. His large paws pressed down on Jiang Yinghe's shoulders. The claws were fully retracted, but the paws themselves had enough strength to easily secure someone.

The big cat lowered his head and let his barbed tongue gently glide across Jiang Yinghe's collarbone. The motion seemed like he was licking...a tiny piece of butter cake.

The skin that had been licked immediately reddened. No matter how slight the pressure, Jiang Yinghe's current body was still overly weak. A body that had been pampered for a long time was easily bruised, but it actually didn't hurt too much.

Chang Ye licked him fervently and randomly. His warm breath scattered against the other person's neck.

Trapped under a giant ball of fluff, Jiang Yinghe could only pat his paws and ask, "...You really couldn't resist?"

"No, thanks to you." Chang Ye thought.

The big cat nuzzled against him, using the tip of his nimble tail to undo the front of his coat. He whined, aggrieved and spoiled, "Shizun..."

Speaking exposed the deep emotions hidden in his raspy voice. His seduction was almost powerful enough to bring ruin to a country. Entranced by the pleasant voice echoing in his ears, Jiang Yinghe silently sighed in admiration.

As expected of a Devil...

"Shizun, help me..."

If this was the tone and shape that Da Ji took before King Zhou to lead him into corruption, then the monarch couldn't be blamed.

Jiang Yinghe had to ask as he was randomly nuzzled by a lowered head. "How am I supposed to help you?"

Once again, he failed to realize exactly what he was being asked of him.

Chang Ye seemed to take his words as implicit permission, trust and reward, all at once. His tail flicked open Jiang Yinghe's tunic and silently crept further in.

Something that was the opposite of soft seemed to emerge from the fluffy exterior of the big cat.

Jiang Yinghe didn't realize at first what it was. In fact, his knee actually jerked up and brushed past it until the paws on his shoulder suddenly pressed down harder.

He definitely felt slightly standing barbs there.

...Damn it.

He regretted his previous words very much.

No, how was he supposed to help with this? Was this something anyone could help with??

More memories began to surface. Jiang Yinghe tried to touch it again as images that would definitely be censored came to mind.

"Shizun..."

His little disciple's voice just had to be the perfect balance of soft obedience as he whispered into Jiang Yinghe's ear. His fur was also so silky and pleasant to touch. "Do you not like Ye-er?"

It was very pitiful.

Jiang Yinghe momentarily softened and hesitated for a moment before saying, "No, that's not—"

"So you like me then."

The big cat's tail wrapped around his narrow waist again as that barbed thing began to rub against his leg. However, it did so very lightly, like it was afraid of hurting him.

Jiang Yinghe patted his paws, which loosened their grasp. He rose to a half sitting position and looked at the big cat. After a moment of silence, he said in frustration, "...I guess pet cats do need to be neutered."

Chang Ye didn't take this statement to heart at all. Instead, he leaned in to lick him with extreme pleasure. Just as the atmosphere grew more intimate and heated, there was a sudden boom outside the door, as if someone was fighting nearby.

Then the door to their room crumbled as an evil cultivator radiating demonic energy stormed in. There was quite a ruckus behind him, as if an entire crowd of people had cornered him here.

The evil cultivator was completely taken aback by the devil in the room. He suddenly felt a rush of joy. After all, the enemy of your enemy is your friend. He shouted, "Your Excellency, please help a fellow cultivator of the..."

Before he could finish his sentence, a violent wave of devilish energy sent him tumbling head over heels, crashing through several walls in the process.

Dust flew through the air.

The big cat in front of him seemed to be enraged by this intrusion, but he didn't kill the person responsible. Instead, he morphed into his human form and embraced his Shizun, burying his nose in the crook of his shoulder for a while before quietly muttering, "Who is his 'fellow cultivator'..."

Instead of directly killing the man, he continued huddling against his shizun as though highly aggrieved.

Jiang Yinghe let out a sigh of relief and comforted the red-clothed boy in his arms, "Alright, alright. Ye-er isn't a devil cultivator, he's a pillar of the righteous path."

After the dust had settled, Jiang Yinghe looked up to see a man in pale pink cultivator robes standing amongst the broken walls.

"He Huan Sect was pursuing this traitor. It was thanks to this immortal comrade that we..." Protector He's eyes widened as his words trailed off. He stared at Jiang Yinghe, who was comforting a youth, for some time before he managed to speak. "Jiang Xianjun?"

Jiang Yinghe couldn't recall who he was. "And you are?"

Protector He recovered his wits and said, "This one is the He Huan Sect Protector, He Chu. I am here to hunt down a traitor and settle Sect affairs on behalf of Deputy Sect Master Hun Yuan Xianjun."

He looked down in disbelief at the evil cultivator who had been thrown back by devilish energy. Then he looked up at Jiang Yinghe who was gradually calming the archdevil. He cautiously asked, "Has Jiang Xianjun exited seclusion then?"

Naturally, Jiang Yinghe didn't know what had happened after he had reincarnated. He just looked at Protector He quietly.

Protector He shivered at that look as he filled in all the holes himself. He quickly said, "It has been 370 years since we last met. The Deputy Sect Master has always been looking forward to your return. What a strange fortune to meet you here. Xianjun must have other pressing matters, so this junior will not take up more of your time."

With what he had made up in his head, he picked up the traitor who had fainted by his feet and left after bidding farewell again.

All that was left was the precarious and crumbling inn, and the aggrieved, sobbing devil in Jiang Yinghe's arms.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't understand Chang Ye's desire for intimacy, but he was an empathetic and good-natured individual, and this was his own disciple. So he let Chang Ye fuss in his arms while he stroked his hair. "What are you crying for? Are you this sad over someone seeing you in heat?"

Chang Ye blinked. This isn't sadness...

Chang Ye's long, dark hair was thrown into disarray by Jiang Yinghe's ministrations. He leaned in and placed a line of delicate kisses from Shizun's neck up to his lips before saying, "I'm only upset because we were interrupted."

Jiang Yinghe found his sulky and pouty look to be rather cute. He couldn't help but chuckle.

"You might scare me if you're that big. The way you look now is better... Do you still need Shizun to help you?"

Chang Ye completely recovered from his momentary depression. He raised his glittering eyes sharply as that tail that was not quite under control came around again. He changed track to acting cute and obedient, giving off the refreshing air of a youngster.

Something seemed to click into place in Jiang Yinghe's heart, like the minute hand of a clock that once again accurately displayed the time.

He suddenly realized that he had always liked this person.

'Always'...

Exactly how long ago was that?

—-

At around the same time at the He Huan Sect...

The He Huan Sect specialized in dual cultivation, so its cultivators were encouraged to seek out cultivation partners. In fact, the faction that valued

passion over romance would keep an entire harem of pets and cauldrons. Many here were well versed in the Sect's practised techniques.

When Protector He returned, Tong Guiyu was reading the latest illustrated version of a book released by the Blue Hill Publishing House. He cast it aside when he was halfway through and spoke languidly, "Their quality is declining with every new novel. The main writer of Blue Hill must be getting lazy..."

Protector He bowed and truthfully reported the events that had transpired during the capture of the traitor, only to be stopped by Tong Guiyu mid-sentence with a wave of his hand.

"All right. This master is aware." Tong Guiyu closed the book, "Ever since Jiang Yinghe entered closed door cultivation, his disciples have been harder and harder to find. Even the people this story is based on are scarce."

Protector He was silent for a moment as he took in how tired Tong Guiyu looked. He hesitantly asked, "Deputy Sect Master, this subordinate was about to report that, while tracking down the traitor, I encountered...Jiang Xianjun."

Tong Guiyu's gaze immediately bore into him. After confirming that the Protector wasn't lying, he suddenly laughed. "Why did he suddenly appear here after three hundred years of seclusion? Did anything happen to you guys?"

Protector He recalled that moment, "This subordinate saw a...a devil in red by Jiang Xianjun's side. He was in the form of a young adult. Also..."

Tong Guiyu already had an idea of who it was by now. He massaged his knees and said, "What else?"

"I couldn't sense any spiritual energy from Xianjun's body."

A sudden silence descended upon the room.

Tong Guiyu waved his hand. "You're dismissed."

He watched as Protector He turned away, his mind quickly recalling several major events over the years... Wasn't Jiang Yinghe's youngest disciple a young man dressed in red?

Had Jiang Yinghe met with an accident? Did Peng Lai cover up him losing his cultivation for some reason by claiming he went into seclusion? Also, why did Jiang Yinghe appear near the He Huan Sect now?

Hmm, the fastest route to Peng Lai from here is nearby...

Tong Guiyu pondered for a long time, but he couldn't come to any concrete conclusions. He summoned Hongyan and wiped the blade as he continued to think.

The sword was razor sharp and gleaming under the light.

Tong Guiyu looked at the sword. To be more specific, his gaze was fixed upon the light pink sword pendant on its hilt. He muttered to himself, "After he entered seclusion... Guang Han Palace's Li Yue Zhenren fell in Luo City. Guang Han Palace and the Ying Zhou School even quarreled about it..."

"But Peng Lai remained suspiciously silent on the matter."

"...Then Yan Caiwei entered seclusion in order to break through to the Hollowed Cave stage. Yun Buxiu followed suit a hundred years later. Now only Sect Master Zhou watches over Peng Lai...along with..."

"Li Huanhan and Qin Jun. Although the two of them rarely show themselves, they are truly unfathomable and extraordinary in battle. One hundred and twenty-four years ago, the Ying Zhou School had tried to take advantage of Peng Lai's weakened state and came to challenge the sect, only to be repelled by a single sword strike from Li Huanhan. The challengers were never heard from again."

What he didn't say was that, after Jiang Yinghe's seclusion, the Tian Mo School that was once again unified, the Nether Realm that had reclaimed their Patriarch, and the Devil Race led by their revived King all remained

restrained and minimized conflicts. One could almost be fooled into thinking they were at peace.

And the news of there being three Half-step Golden Immortals had been thoroughly suppressed.

Tong Guiyu thought for a moment and suddenly said, "The red-clothed youth...is a devil?"

His gaze became thoughtful as he beckoned to his pet servant waiting nearby. "Call Protector He back and tell him that I have two letters for him to deliver. One is to be handed over to the Celestial Pavilion and sent to the Tian Mo School. The other he is to personally take to the Nether Realm."

Author's Corner

Tong Guiyu: New book material is here!

OceanofPDF.com

CH60 - MAKING YELLOW CONTENT? (Draft)

Editor: Sahlonknir

The twilight clouds remained suspended in the sky.

The sound of the wind rushed to his ears as the giant eagle flew onwards. Even though it was flying relatively slowly, Jiang Yinghe still experienced his ears popping when it landed.

He rearranged his hair and sleeves as he sat on the cliff and looked down. Lush forests of ancient trees greeted him, as well as the looming peaks in the distance.

Clouds the colour of fire covered half of the sky.

Jiang Yinghe stared at them for a long while before another shade of red sprang to mind, a shade even more vivid and passionate than the hazy sunset.

His memory was fuzzy and difficult to decipher, so he turned his head to look at Chang Ye, who rested beside him.

Chang Ye turned his ink black eyes to meet his gaze. They were filled with nothing but pureness and sincerity.

A gentle breeze lifted the hair framing Jiang Yinghe's face.

Everything was as it once was.

To Jiang Yinghe, the past 370 years seemed to be but a drunken dream. However, it was an endless cycle of pain and recovery for others.

Chang Ye looked at him for quite some time before he quietly said, "Shizun."

"En." Jiang Yinghe responded. He could sense the unease radiating from the other figure, so he raised a hand to ruffle those soft locks. "What's on your mind?"

...Nothing really.

Just the selfish desires of a child.

Chang Ye didn't voice any of this as he let Shizun ruffle his hair. He shuffled over and said, "Shizun, Ye-er is actually not your only disciple."

His tone was hesitant, but he went on.

"I'm your third one."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. "I vaguely knew this. I just couldn't recall the specifics."

"But the three of us," Chang Ye continued seriously, "are actually one person."

"...One person?"

Jiang Yinghe was stunned. These words seemed to pierce an invisible membrane in his mind. Gradually, the figures of the other two became clearer.

Chang Ye was far too close. His breath slowly approached, revealing a familiar and provocative fragrance.

This scent lingered around them.

"Ye-er actually doesn't want to become one with them," Chang Ye said, "but for Shizun's sake..."

His words trailed off.

"I'm guessing they feel the same way."

He placed a very light kiss on Jiang Yinghe's lips, but the words he murmured were even more alluring.

"They must be willing to do this for your sake."

Jiang Yinghe mulled over this revelation. Just when he was about to reply, the giant eagle resting nearby cawed as it looked at a fairly close point in the sky.

Chang Ye followed its gaze. He noticed how the streams on a lone peak before the fiery horizon turned dark red and viscous. It was reminiscent of blood.

Chang Ye's eyes dimmed. He said to Jiang Yinghe, "Shixiong's going to hit me now."

Jiang Yinghe was startled, "What?"

Chang Ye added, "He's always disdained me. Now that I didn't tell him that I've found you, Li-shixiong's definitely going to lose his temper."

Before Jiang Yinghe could finish deciphering this sentence, the streams of fresh blood on the lone peak rose and gathered to form the figure of a man.

Li Huanhan stepped out from between the currents made up of blood, dressed in dark robes. His cloak shifted slightly as the chilly mountain breeze of early spring blew past, revealing the rust-red fabric on the inner surface.

There was a black snake with shining scales curled around his shoulders. A pair of ice-cold eyes the colour of blood swept across his surroundings.

When they alighted on Jiang Yinghe, Li Huanhan closed his eyes as if he had drifted off to sleep from exhaustion.

The residual sun stained the clouds behind him a rich shade of crimson.

All Jiang Yinghe felt was an arctic blast of wind brush past as he turned to take a look. But Chang Ye was forced to retreat dozens of steps by this sword wind. As the current scattered, a blood red sword swept him into an adjacent cliff, half of which promptly exploded.

Not only that, many of the smaller protrusions in between were also shattered by the energy emitted by the sword. Cracks emerged under Jiang Yinghe's feet as the giant eagle beside him suddenly took to the skies with a loud cry.

Just as the cliff broke apart, Jiang Yinghe suddenly fell into a familiar embrace. He landed in a safe location with Li Huanhan holding him by the waist.

Jiang Yinghe could only watch as this series of events unfolded. He was still worrying over Chang Ye when his hands were caught by the other party.

Li Huanhan carefully checked him over to make sure he was not injured anywhere before frowning and rubbing his hands.

"How are they this cold?"

It was early spring at the moment, and they were on top of a cliff to boot. Even if he wore many layers, their effectiveness was still diminished under these conditions. But Jiang Yinghe thought he could handle it, which is why he didn't mention it to Chang Ye.

Jiang Yinghe's fingers were narrow, thin and slender, and their joints were faintly blue due to the weather. Li Huanhan's hands covered them completely, but his body temperature wasn't high either.

Jiang Yinghe said, "It's fine, it's not too cold. Is Chang Ye..."

Before he could finish, a weight settled around his shoulders. Black fleece adorned the top of the cloak in a soft half-circle. The rust-red interior reached all the way down to his ankles.

Li Huanhan spoke as he lowered his head to fasten the cloak, "He won't die."

At that moment, perhaps to illustrate his point, the shattered mountain face in the distance disintegrated even more into dust as a seemingly weak but completely unharmed youth in red emerged. He flew back and landed in front of Jiang Yinghe.

However, when Chang Ye tried to get a little closer, a sword the colour of fresh blood blocked his path. He glanced at the Jimie sword freely radiating demonic energy before turning to Li Huanhan, who was tying the cloak for Jiang Yinghe.

"Why are you this angry?" Chang Ye asked, "I was only able to find Shizun because half of my devil core was..."

Li Huanhan turned a deaf ear as he tied the ribbon before looking into the sea of stars in Jiang Yinghe's bright eyes. He quietly asked, "Did he bully you?"

Jiang Yinghe was about to say, "How could Chang Ye have the guts to bully his shizun" when he remembered how he helped relieve his little disciple's heat at the inn yesterday. He hesitated, "No."

It was because of this half second of hesitation that the vividly crimson sword flashed brightly, as if sensing its master's intentions, and flew over, enveloped by raging demonic energy.

It swatted the little disciple away again.

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment. He didn't expect how 'harmonious' the relationship between these two disciples of his were. He sighed, "Nothing happened, really. Don't be angry."

It was difficult to tell when Li Huanhan was angry. He has always been a stoic and emotionless man who revealed a third of his true emotions on his face at most. His words were not the best clue about his mood. Rather, it was his actions and habits that revealed his temperament.

For example, right now Jiang Yinghe vaguely felt like he was eating vinegar, although he wasn't sure why.

Li Huanhan brushed back the strands of hair by Jiang Yinghe's ear. "Do you remember me?"

Jiang Yinghe nodded seriously and said, "I remember...a little bit."

"Of what?"

Jiang Yinghe was too embarrassed to say it out loud. He stared into the other party's calm red eyes for a moment before leaning in close to his ear. "I know that...you once locked me in a small dark room."

The moment Li Huanhan appeared, he recalled the name and identity of this person. However, Jiang Yinghe didn't expect the first memory he recovered to be...that. As he mulled over the complex emotions attached, he added.

"I also remember that you told me...you wanted to be by my side and live peacefully together forever."

Actually, Jiang Yinghe omitted the latter part of that phrase, which was "without ever knowing the meaning of cruelty".

Li Huanhan was taken aback. Slowly wrapping his arms around Jiang Yinghe, he whispered, "I'm sorry for my impulsive actions then."

Their heartbeats seemed to synchronize as their chests pressed together, radiating a slight residual heat. Then the almost always silent system added a brand new purification bar with a ding.

Jiang Yinghe stared at the almost full blackened status bar before turning to the soft spoken man with dark eyes in front of him. He felt a sense of dissonance trying to connect the two.

The system issued a new notification.

"Purification Task 1: Please give the Innate True Nature a reassuring kiss."

For the first time, Jiang Yinghe heard emotion from the mechanical voice of the system. He went over its words again in his head, pausing on "Innate True Nature". He suddenly remembered some of the cultivation techniques he had learned before.

Among the techniques of the righteous faction, there were many for incarnating outside the body. They inevitably involved splitting the soul. One theory stated that the human soul was divided into three parts, namely the innate true nature, the acquired mentality, and the tendency of the heart.

At this point, Jiang Yinghe hadn't yet discovered that the innate true nature was a combination of good and evil, as existence itself was fraught with setbacks. The acquired mentality, however, needed to be constantly honed and corrected by the trials one would face from Heaven's predetermined path for them.

This world was, after all, a muddled place that humans could never fully control.

The system impatiently interrupted his thoughts by repeating the mission objective again. Jiang Yinghe looked up at Li Huanhan's nearly full progress bar before meeting his eyes.

They were gloomy and a dark red, resembling both slowly flowing lava and crystal clear gems.

Jiang Yinghe could not look away. Tentatively, he leaned over to kiss him. "...I don't blame you anymore."

His slight initiative managed to drive back the almost filled blackened status bar by a large margin to a relatively safe percentage.

...Is this guy this easy to coax?

Just as Jiang Yinghe was considering whether or not to comfort the other party a little more, he was taken by the waist and kissed. The warm tip of a tongue ventured into his mouth.

Although his waist was held tightly, there was just enough space left, a half finger's width. It seemed to be the invisible battleground between self control and desire.

The black snake coiled on Li Huanhan's shoulder opened its eyes from its dormant state, as if affected by the emotions of its master. Its vertical pupils unmovingly captured the sight before it.

At the same time, Chang Ye, who had been swatted off the cliff for the second time, climbed back up and shook the dust off his claws before he noticed what was going on.

Although his cultivation had fallen and he was no longer a match for Li Huanhan in terms of fighting ability, this didn't affect his ability to compete for Shizun's favour.

Just as Chang Ye morphed into a little kitten and got ready to pounce over, the bright red blood sword automatically rose and imposingly placed itself before his eyes.

Chang Ye: "..."

"...Life is difficult." sighed the kitten.

Li Huanhan seemed to sense Chang Ye's return, becoming more restrained. He fondled Shizun's slightly red lips with a hand as he quietly asked, "You still don't know to keep breathing throughout?"

Jiang Yinghe grabbed his hand and forced it downwards before saying, "—I shouldn't have thought you were easy to coax."

This person was good in every other way, but he was impulsive when it came to love. And sometimes he could be quite fierce when he lost control.

Jiang Yinghe unconsciously recovered this insight from his memories.

He turned to look at the little cat on the cliff's edge that was guarded by the blood sword. The little white cat covered in soot and debris was meowing up a storm, his entire body radiating petulance.

Chang Ye saw Jiang Yinghe looking over and immediately perked up again. When he tried to bound over into this person's arms, he was mercilessly intercepted in midair, where he now hung by the scruff of his neck.

An indifferent voice suffused with a hidden hint of distaste rang out.

"You're covered in dust and too dirty for that."

Li Huanhan turned to look at the jet-black cloak on Jiang Yinghe, and the pastel robe beneath it, adding.

"Don't touch him."

The little white cat literally could not be more aggrieved than in this moment. He fiercely showed off his fangs and claws in midair for a moment, before his round, inky eyes turned to Jiang Yinghe. Chang Ye meowed pitifully twice at him.

Touched, Jiang Yinghe comforted him, "I'll give you a bath when we get to an inn."

The same instant the little white cats perked up at the word "bath", Li Huanhan, who was carrying him, spoke up, "Let me do it."

The little white cat stiffened. He wilted and lowered his head, meowing quietly to himself as he angrily thought, "This invisible tank of vinegar... Pah!"

—-

The invisible tank of vinegar became one of Jiang Yinghe's escorts. He also gave the letter he had received to Jiang Yinghe.

Jiang Yinghe saw pale pink paper inlaid with peach blossom petals when he opened it up. Jiang Yinghe's whereabouts and Li Huanhan's identity were

hinted at in incomparably beautiful calligraphy. At the end, there was a postscript mentioning a gift for the Saint.

For some reason, Jiang Yinghe thought the handwriting looked very familiar. He couldn't remember who it belonged to, so he asked, "What gift did he send you?"

Li Huanhan glanced at him before expressionlessly taking out a book from his spatial artifact.

He handed it to Jiang Yinghe.

The cover of the book was a solid blue, and its neatly written title vertically spelled out—

The Xianjun's Secret Lover

Jiang Yinghe: "...The style isn't too shabby."

That was all he could really vocalize at this moment, pure amazement.

"It seemed that humans in any world desire a perfect romance..." he thought as he flipped open the cover. Then the illustration on the first page caused him to stiffen.

The little white cat that was fresh from his bath scooted over like he was curious too. Jiang Yinghe pushed him away before he even got a glimpse of it.

Jiang Yinghe closed the book, thinking that he must've opened it the wrong way. When he turned the page again, he had no choice but to confirm exactly what type of book this was. It was a little yellow book of the cultivation world; the kind with illustrations.

...This was way too shocking.

Jiang Yinghe let out a long breath. A thought vaguely rose to the surface. This seemed like the work of a friend of his.

"...There's no signature anywhere. Just who sent it?"

Li Huanhan answered, "It was entrusted to the Heavenly Pavilion for delivery. Most people would find it difficult to locate the Tian Mo School."

Jiang Yinghe nodded and looked at the handwriting on the letter again. "....He doesn't seem to have any intention of hiding his identity. I swear I've seen this handwriting before.....Tong Guiyu?"

As he spoke, he turned over the letter and found a heart painted on the back with cinnabar.

Jiang Yinghe sighed. "...It really is him."

As expected of the He Huan Sect, the site of the largest and most obscene adult industry in the cultivation world. Everyone there was filled with strange colours.

Author's Corner

Tong Guiyu, who had changed colours: I'm unbelievably excited right now~

OceanofPDF.com

CH61 - HONING WILLPOWER (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe put that little yellow book aside. "I believe Tong Guiyu intended this for me. He probably had some suspicions after meeting with Protector He yesterday he wanted to confirm."

Jiang Yinghe looked towards Li Huanhan. It seemed like the other person was aware of this from how calm he was, but Jiang Yinghe still explained, "Hun Yuan Xianjun isn't old-fashioned or a stickler for rules. It isn't a big deal even if he knows of your identities."

Li Huanhan nodded, his demeanor unchanged. "Before I arrived, I had the Tian Mo School covertly surround He Huan Sect."

His words trailed off as he took a glance at the night scenery outside the window. "Even if Tong Xianjun had malicious intentions, this matter will not have reached the ears of others."

He spoke so calmly that it was a moment before a startled Jiang Yinghe realized that Huanhan was prepared to destroy the other sect. Although his words were as plain as usual, they concealed a trace of extremely sharp killing intent.

"But I held back because I understand Shizun's temperament." Li Huanhan continued, "I wouldn't have done anything if he was just curious or joking around."

Only at this moment did he truly act like the Xuehe Demon Lord of a thousand years ago. When it came to matters like power struggles or confrontations, he never hesitated to utilize the most violent and cruel solutions.

Jiang Yinghe was relieved. "When did you receive this letter?"

Li Huanhan thought about it. "At midnight last night."

Since He Huan Sect had quite a bit of territory in its surroundings, it took some time to make the necessary arrangements. Therefore, Li Huanhan borrowed the positioning abilities of the Blood Shadow and the Blood Pool to arrive so quickly.

Jiang Yinghe nodded. Before he spoke, Li Huanhan seemed to suddenly sense something. He turned his head to look at a lamp on the side.

The candlelight was bright. It cast long and wavering shadows on the walls. Chang Ye seemed to also notice something was amiss. He approached the candle and circled around it twice, his fluffy tail waving in midair.

"He's here." Li Huanhan said.

Before Jiang Yinghe could ask for clarification, the candle in front of him flashed, turning from ordinary mortal flames to the green-blue hue of phosphorescent fire.

At the same time, a dense and oppressive cloud of miasma filled the surrounding air. The thick fog spread out until one wasn't even able to see their own fingers.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback for a split second before his hand was tightly gripped. He looked down to see a ghastly skeletal hand holding his. The stark white bones of exquisite quality seemed like the perfect model for medical students to study with.

That was the first thought in Jiang Yinghe's mind. He wasn't scared at all as the icy bone hand tightened its grip.

The next moment, flesh, blood and skin grew to cover the limb until it was indistinguishable from a human's hand. Since Jiang Yinghe was so close, he felt the other's ephemeral body slowly solidify until he was touching slightly cool skin.

Jiang Yinghe didn't feel wary at all. In fact, he found all this to be rather familiar. A cool breeze brushed past his ear, accompanied by the quiet and hoarse voice of a man.

"Do you still remember me?"

...I swear there's a ghost story that starts like this.

Jiang Yinghe felt like this was the perfect setup for a ghost story, but he was still fearless. He even wanted to scold the other person for his over dramatic entrance.

He pinched the fingertips resting on his palm and said, "Nie Xiaoqin?"

The other person was silent for a moment. His next question was dripping with barely hidden jealousy and rage, "Who is Nie Xiaoqin?"

The surrounding fog surged, sending the phosphorus fire adrift. Jiang Yinghe was greatly amused. He thought for a moment before deciding to explain. "She's a very beautiful...female ghost."

"A female ghost?" Jiang Yinghe could hear this guy gnashing his teeth. "Which ghostly buffoon dared to steal away my person behind my back."

Jiang Yinghe lowered his head to hide his smile. He tugged on the cold hand holding his tightly. "But she's very pretty."

The wraith in the fog seemed to be more anxious than ever. Jiang Yinghe could feel him draw closer, gently kissing the base of his ear before whispering, "Does Shizun like pretty ones like Chang Ye?"

The air brushing past his ear was alternating between hot and cold, like the other person was somewhat angry. Jiang Yinghe, fearing that he might go

cause trouble for Chang Ye, said, "But she doesn't like me back. The person in her heart is a scholar named Ning Caixin."

There were a few more beats of silence. Then the other person sighed in relief. His voice, however, was still a little indignant.

"She must be blind to not like you."

Closely following those words, a pair of thin and cold lips pressed kisses all the way from Jiang Yinghe's earlobe to the corner of his lips. Before it could go any further, the surrounding phosphorescent fires violently trembled as the thick fog was gradually dispelled by sword winds.

Qin Jun stood in front of him.

Jiang Yinghe looked behind him to see the bright red Jimie sword partially slammed into the floor. It seemed to be what whisked away the enveloping fog.

Li Huanhan sat opposite him, slowly tapping his finger against the table. "How childish."

Qin Jun didn't care what Li Huanhan thought of him. He looked at Jiang Yinghe with gray eyes the colour of mist. "You really don't remember me?"

Li Huanhan wasn't the only person who thought he was acting like a child. Jiang Yinghe pulled at Qin Jun's collar as he deliberately said, "I don't. The only one I remember is Nie Xiao—"

"Wu..."

Clearly this guy had no sense of humour.

The kiss sealed his lips. Like he was trying to jog his memory, the other person deepened their connection, exploring further beyond. Jiang Yinghe couldn't breathe. He gripped Qin Jun's shoulders and tilted his head away from this brief yet fierce kiss. He stepped back, trying to catch his breath, "Jun...Jun-er!"

Qin Jun barely managed to stop himself. He reluctantly licked his lips, capturing the taste of his shizun. Before he could say anything, a cat pounced on him and separated the two of them.

...As expected of Chang Ye. This guy's an expert at finding needles in haystacks.

Qin Jun got up slightly and retreated a distance before turning to Li Huanhan. "Having so many demonic cultivators around He Huan Sect is too suspicious. Withdraw them."

Li Huanhan met his gaze head on. "Withdraw them?"

"Yes." Qin Jun took out the letter and another book. "This letter was personally delivered by the He Huan Sect Protector. He wouldn't have come personally if they had ill intentions... I noticed that the demonic energy in the surroundings was slightly higher than normal. It's very likely to attract the attention of others."

Li Huanhan nodded quietly. "Fine."

When their conversation ended, Qin Jun then casually passed both the letter and the book to Jiang Yinghe. "There's nothing in the letter, but this book is...."

Jiang Yinghe stiffened as he received the book. Upon recalling what was in the last one, he had the foresight to put down the kitten in his arms. He cautiously asked, "What about it?"

"Its contents are very...interesting."

Jiang Yinghe glanced at the cover. The title of this book was "The Days and Nights I Spent with a Sword Saint".

With a title like that, his expectations for what was inside lowered even further...

Jiang Yinghe coughed and said, "Young people shouldn't overindulge in this kind of stuff."

"It's not that." Qin Jun explained, "There's a comment inside saying that this book...is based on previously unknown accounts of Sword Saint Taichu's life."

Li Huanhan glanced at him. "Sword Saint Taichu's era was even before Chang Ye's. After tens of thousands of years, it's likely that the facts have been twisted and distorted, if not outright fabricated."

Qin Jun could vaguely understand Li Huanhan's concern. He seemed to be afraid that, if Jiang Yinghe was really Sword Saint Taichu's reincarnation, he would one day remember his dead wife and close his heart again.

After all, the most widely circulated information about Sword Saint Taichu was that he had married young and subsequently lost his wife.

Jiang Yinghe had always wanted to find out more about this Sword Saint Taichu. He had a suspicion that this transmigrated senior of his was closely connected to himself. For that reason, he didn't throw away the little yellow book. "In that case, I will keep it and...take a look."

He put away the books and caught the little white cat who was in his lap trying to sneak a look. He stroked it with both hands until the kitten was in a daze, laying back and contentedly kneading biscuits.

Qin Jun had a strange feeling as he stared at the little gremlin in Shizun's arms. He sat next to Li Huanhan and asked, "Why does this cat seem so..."

"Slutty?" Li Huanhan said faintly.

"Tsk, so Li-shixiong can get jealous too."

Li Huanhan ignored his verbal barbs. His tone was still as cold and indifferent as ever.

"Putting up with you is already testing my bottom line. What, do you want to put it to the test?"

Qin Jun braced his jaw with one hand and watched as the little white cat pestered his Shizun to pamper him more. "Bottom line? You're right. If any

other old or new lovers like that beautiful female ghost or an unforgettable dead wife pops up... I might as well go reincarnate right now."

Li Huanhan gave this wraith a look. Without any tact, he said, "Even the Heavenly Dao doesn't want you."

Qin Jun sighed. "...I don't need you to remind me."

—-

It was barely dark out when Jiang Yinghe went to rest.

Perhaps it was because of the little joke he played on Qin Jun, but Jiang Yinghe tossed and turned for a long time, unable to sleep.

He thought for a moment, before getting up and lighting a small lamp near his bed. He took out the book he had just received, the one entitled, "The Days and Nights I Spent with a Sword Saint".

Jiang Yinghe's memory had almost recovered by now, but many details still eluded him. Since he couldn't sleep, he might as well study this book.

The illustration on the very first page practically assaulted his eyes. Jiang Yinghe had to pause for a moment before he could start to read the story.

Although the book was based on Sword Saint Taichu, there were obviously a lot of artistic liberties taken. Jiang Yinghe was able to maintain his composure at first, but he quickly grew embarrassed as time went on. This protagonist was just too similar to himself!

Especially at the parts where the protagonist did it with his cultivation partner in all sorts of places.

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...Is it even possible to do it there?"

According to the book, the answer was a resounding yes. It even gave a very detailed account of how to accomplish such a thing.

Even the sky itself was not spared.

Jiang Yinghe was once again shocked at the techniques used. He felt like the three views he grew up with underneath that red flag were beginning to crack.

And here he thought using his hands to relieve Chang Ye during his rut was pretty risque...

The candle wax slowly melted.

Just half way through the book, Jiang Yinghe's head was filled with scenes of restriction artifacts, humiliation play, and the deepening affections of the protagonist as he was bent over this way and that by his cultivation partner.

...Hiss. There was even a cowgirl position scene.

Jiang Yinghe expressionlessly put down the book, but his ears were already completely red. He needed to work on his tolerance.

In the meantime, Jiang Yinghe started trying to extract useful information from the book's contents.

The soft and sweet call of a cat interrupted his musings.

When he looked up, he saw that Chang Ye, who was in the form of a small, white cat, had jumped onto the bed and came over to him with a harmless expression.

Jiang Yinghe wasn't on guard at all. He held the kitten and softed it like he always did for a while, gradually growing drowsy. Eventually, he fell asleep with the kitten in his arms.

The night was as quiet and gentle as water.

His breathing was even and steady.

The cat in his arms stared at him for a long time. When he finally confirmed that Jiang Yinghe was asleep, Chang Ye smugly returned to his human form. When he was about to cuddle with Shizun, someone grabbed him by his collar and pulled him away.

Furious, Chang Ye looked back to meet Li Huanhan's bright red, yet icy cold eyes.

Chang Ye spoke "...What are you doing here?"

His voice was soft so as to not wake up Jiang Yinghe.

Li Huanhan faintly replied. "To supervise you."

Chang Ye was about to implode with rage. His voice couldn't help but get a little louder, "What's wrong with you? Do you hold a grudge against me or something?!"

"Not really." Those blood-red eyes narrowed a bit and shifted to glance into one of the shadows of the lamp. "I'm supervising him as well."

Chang Ye followed his gaze. He saw Qin Jun's figure gradually emerge from one of the shadows, leaning against the wall with a chilling look on his face.

Chang Ye sighed "...This—I can't believe you guys, coming over in the middle of the night with impure intentions! Shame on you both!"

The other two looked at him together. One was emotionless while the other sneered.

Chang Ye stilled. "..."

Li Huanhan threw Chang Ye by his collar onto the floor, taking his rightful seat on the edge of Shizun's bed. Perhaps because he had lots of experience watching over Jiang Yinghe at night or because wraiths didn't need sleep, Qin Jun went even further and melded into the shadows a safe and appropriate distance away.

In the end, Chang Ye could only reluctantly turn back into a cat and squirm into Shizun's arms again.

After a good night's sleep...

When the morning came, Jiang Yinghe woke up a little slower than usual. He dreamt of many strange things, which caused him to blank out for a moment. Then he discovered the kitten in his arms had already woken up. His furry tail was curled around Jiang Yinghe's wrist, twisting this way and that seductively.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't help it. He went to pat the kitten, but what first met his hand were cold fingers instead of soft fluffy fur.

A slightly derisive voice entered his ears, accompanied by breaths that were sometimes cold and sometimes hot.

"Don't you get tired of petting it for so long?"

Jiang Yinghe subconsciously replied, "How can you get tired of petting cats?"

He turned to see Qin Jun looking at him nearby, with a few strands of braided hair in his hand...

"Jun-er?"

Another familiar presence intimately approached.

Li Huanhan held his hand and leaned down to press a kiss to his brow whispering, "Are you fully awake?"

Jiang Yinghe hesitated for a moment. "Probably."

"En." Li Huanhan murmured, "Good morning."

"...Good morning." As Jiang Yinghe looked around, he couldn't help but remember a scene from the book he read last night, where the Sword Saint's cultivation partner used a dual cultivation technique... The description of the day after held more than a passing resemblance to the current situation.

He coughed twice and tried to put the image out of his mind. "Why are you all here?"

After a brief silence, Li Huanhan replied, "...To hone our willpower."

Qin Jun nodded thoughtfully, "En, that's right."

Chang Ye languidly echoed, "Meow..."

Sahl

Ah! All our boys are back together! It's lovely seeing them being nice, like good children...and er, honing their willpower not to 'cultivate' with their Shizun...

OceanofPDF.com

CH62 - YOU'RE SLANDERING MY DISCIPLES (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

It was only when Jiang Yinghe actually returned to Peng Lai that it all became a little more real to him.

He had slowly read over more than half of those books that had somehow slipped through the censorship department. Other than a few scenes that couldn't be aired on television, the other notable thing was how similar this sword saint's personality was to his own. Well, an exaggerated version of his personality at least.

Only after stepping foot in Peng Lai did more memories gradually emerge in Jiang Yinghe's mind. The first place he headed to was not the White Crane Jade Manor, but the main palace.

Several rounds of disciple selection had passed, so Jiang Yinghe was no longer familiar with many of them. However, these young disciples all seemed to know Li Huanhan and Qin Jun. Their gazes were filled with respect and fear, and everyone seemed very shocked to see the two of them travelling together.

From the reaction of the Peng Lai disciples, Jiang Yinghe could guess that the two of them did not usually meet much and even held hostility towards each other.

The main palace was unguarded. There didn't seem to be anyone inside either. Jiang Yinghe lingered for a moment before heading further in,

following the route from his memories. He saw the silent inner room with its always lit candles.

And the still figure of Zhangmen-shixiong.

The inner room was where all the soul lamps and life tablets were stored. Lamps hung on all four walls. Zhou Zhengping was meditating on a futon in the middle of the room when he heard the sound of approaching footsteps.

The footsteps came to a stop.

Jiang Yinghe was dressed in a snow-white tunic with a palm-wide pale blue sash outlining his figure. A thick but light black cloak was resting on his shoulders, contrasting greatly with his light robes.

The two men stared at each other for a moment. The silence seemed to stretch on forever until Zhou Zhengping's whisk fell from his hands. It rolled a slight distance away.

Zhou Zhengping withdrew his gaze and retrieved his whisk. "You're back."

"En."

This was the place where Peng Lai's life tablets were kept, so none of the other three followed him in. Right now, Jiang Yinghe's body did not radiate any sort of aura, and his cultivation was nonexistent. He was just an ordinary mortal. But for some reason, when he stood opposite Zhou Zhengping, he felt like he was transported back in time.

Jiang Yinghe walked up to him and swept his gaze over the soul lamps on the wall. "I once embarked on a long road to see distant mountains. Now I have returned to where I started from."

"The roughness of the road," Zhou Zhengping looked at him, "is what determines the true meaning of the journey. Sit down."

Jiang Yinghe obediently sat down. Zhou Zhengping handed over an ancient book titled 'Clean Energy like Ice'. It seemed to be a cultivation manual.

"This is what you practiced before you were reincarnated. It is the source of all your snow and ice cultivation."

Jiang Yinghe nodded his head and received the manual. However, Zhou Zhengping then took out a qiankun bag and casually emptied it, revealing several hundred jade slips.

"These are the cultivation and sword techniques you practiced for nearly a thousand years before you were reincarnated, as well as some movement techniques." Zhou Zhengping said, matter of factly, "You learned things very quickly back then. I'm sure your progress would only be faster the second time around."

Jiang Yinghe looked at the hundreds of jade slips in front of him. His mind equated them to hundreds of high school and college entrance exams. He had to take a moment to reply, "...Got it."

After Zhou Zhengping finished assigning these tasks, he came to the subject of weapons. He instructed, "Although Wangchen was broken, it was left for you at Qing Jing Peak. Recast it if you wish, or take up another blade of your choice."

For a sword cultivator, replacing a sword was like finding a new lover. Jiang Yinghe shook his head slightly and said, "I'll recast it, there's no need for a replacement."

Zhou Zhengping nodded his head and let him do as he pleased. "Xiao Yun-shidi and your Yan-shijie are both in seclusion. I feel much more at ease now that you are back."

His words inspired a sense of belonging for Jiang Yinghe. He said seriously, "Zhangmen-shixiong needn't worry, I..."

Before he could finish speaking, he heard Zhou Zhengping sigh with relief, "With your return, there will be someone who can safely watch over those two disciples of yours."

Chang Ye rarely returned to Peng Lai. Even since he found Jiang Yinghe, he's spent most of his time at his side looking after his shizun. As a result, most of the current Peng Lai disciples didn't know him.

Jiang Yinghe stuttered, as if he didn't quite understand the meaning of his words, and asked, "Safely...watch over?"

Zhou Zhengping gazed at him for a long time. He sighed and said, "Yes. Do you know what has happened in the three hundred years of your absence?"

"...On my way here, I felt like the current cultivation world was very stable with few conflicts. Qin Jun and Li Huanhan didn't seem to have done anything either."

Zhou Zhengping slowly turned the jade handle of his whisk between his fingers as he looked beyond the main gate.

"They have always been very restrained in front of you."

Jiang Yinghe nodded earnestly, "...Yes, they are quite subtle, I guess."

"Then there's no point in me telling you past events." Zhou Zhengping withdrew his gaze and continued as if nothing had happened, "No matter how dangerous these evil cultivators are, the world is safe with you here."

Jiang Yinghe's curiosity was piqued. He was about to ask a follow-up question when Zhou Zhengping added, "Li Huanhan made another sword pendant for you."

Jiang Yinghe was slightly taken aback. He held a hand to his temple as he recalled the relevant memories. His heart jolted as a warm yet chilling sensation spread through, just like the early spring breeze on Earth.

"Tie it to Wangchen's hilt." Zhou Zhengping said, "It's...the heart of that heavenly demon."

At this time, Jiang Yinghe couldn't yet fully comprehend the meaning of Zhou Zhengping's words. He thought that the other party was saying it represented the heavenly demon's feelings.

It wasn't until after their conversation ended and Jiang Yinghe returned to Qing Jing Peak that he understood. Unfurling the roll of snow-white silk, noticed the new pendant when retrieving his broken sword.

It was vividly red.

Wangchen was the epitome of sheer white frost. The only colour on the sword came from the pendant attached to its hilt. It was still the Cold Jade Mirror Stone, but the item sealed within wasn't the ancient artifact's energy, but the vigorously beating heart of a heavenly demon.

To be more precise, a part of it.

To demonic cultivators, this was the ultimate treasure to enhance their cultivation. It was also a priceless ingredient in the eyes of many refining and formation cultivators.

Jiang Yinghe had some vague insight into Li Huanhan's meaning.

The reason it was so hard to kill the Xuehe Demon Lord was because he had many Blood Ponds to revive him. Even if his body was torn into shreds or his soul annihilated, both could still be nearly perfectly reconstructed from the portions left in the ponds ahead of time.

Since his body had this kind of vitality and transportation capability, Li Huanhan could arrive at his side within moments if a portion of his heart was sealed within the pendant.

From another point of view, it meant that he implicitly trusted the area around Wangchen to be safe.

Jiang Yinghe brushed a hand over the pendant. Then he looked at the blade that had shattered in two.

It was never too late to start anew

At this moment, the little white cat that had followed Jiang Yinghe all the way in meowed twice and enviously rubbed against the hem of his robes. Chang Ye then suddenly shifted into human form and dove into his arms.

Jiang Yinghe has been pounced on many times by him. He habitually opened his arms to catch him. The youth drew near to his ear and breathed, "Does Shizun blame me?"

"Blame you for what?" Jiang Yinghe couldn't keep up with Chang Ye's thoughts, "Did you do something again?"

Hot breath swept around his neck, slowly approaching. Chang Ye's eyes were dark. His astonishing beauty was akin to a lavishly blooming bright red flower that emitted a lingering fragrance.

Jiang Yinghe has always been partial to his appearance. He was in a slight daze until the other's lips came into contact with his.

He refocused. "What are you so reluctant to say?"

"Do you blame me...for my slowness?" Chang Ye whispered, "I feel like I'm the one who understands you the least."

Jiang Yinghe was momentarily startled.

"Although Li Huanhan is violent, heartless and cruel, he understands how to restrain himself and show warmth. He understands Shizun's unwavering sense of justice. Qin Jun...that damn ghost is arrogant and proud beyond measure, but even he understands your intentions and how to remain calm."

Chang Ye's voice grew quieter and quieter. He buried his face in Jiang Yinghe's shoulder as his body sank deeper into the other's embrace.

"But I don't get it. I just know that Shizun is good, that you are good. But I don't understand why I think that. If you really thought that mortal lives were like ants and beneath your notice, I wouldn't be who I am today..."

Jiang Yinghe heard a quiet sob.

Chang Ye kissed him gently. "Will Shizun dislike me because I'm slow?"

Jiang Yinghe was unable to resist his insecure appearance. He decided to not pursue how a certain big cat pounded on him and rubbed against him

this way and that a few days ago. He returned the other's embrace and comforted him, "Of course I won't. And you're not slow, you're just too young..."

He paused, remembering this guy was supposedly the eldest.

But his words really did encourage the other. Chang Ye held him tightly, kissing him gently and carefully at first before burrowing into his mouth with impunity. He even forced Jiang Yinghe back step by step, until he was pressing his shizun against the cold jade walls of the White Crane Jade Manor.

Huanhan and Jun-er were both otherwise occupied. The two of them had taken on some of Peng Lai's internal affairs as disciples of Xuan Wei Xianjun.

The kitten seized this rare opportunity.

Jiang Yinghe slowly reacted, biting him and trying to catch his breath. "Little beast, was this all part of your plan?"

Although he was scolded, Chang Ye's eyes lit up. He wrapped his arms around Shizun's waist and said, "My words were all sincere."

Of course Jiang Yinghe knew they were sincere. Otherwise he wouldn't have fallen for the little cat's big scheme. He half-heartedly pushed him. "What else are you going to do? What's your hand doing?"

The hand untying his cloak paused for a moment, and then continued even more with righteousness and dignity. "It's about time to return this to Li-shixiong."

Now it was clear to him.

Jiang Yinghe grasped his wrist and said, "With your level of self-control and my current condition, things aren't going to end well."

He was just an ordinary mortal without any cultivation right now. Stopping part of the way through was fine, but if things were allowed to progress...

He would probably fall apart halfway.

Chang Ye stiffened as he imagined that scene as well. He tried to argue, "My self-control is..."

Lackluster at best.

Even he wasn't shameless enough to dispute it.

Jiang Yinghe kissed him on the forehead and said, "Come on, is this all that's on your mind everyday? Try a little harder."

Chang Ye was about to whine some more when he heard a few cranes chirping outside. The crane spirits seemed to recognise the visitor and made a few noises to inform their master.

Jiang Yinghe turned his head and saw the main door open. A man in pale pink robes stepped in. Seeing the scene in front of him, his face gradually changed.

Tong Guiyu squinted thoughtfully, "...My timing is almost too incredible."

From his point of view, it was natural to go from kissing by the wall to unbuckling belts and doing something else he liked to watch.

His remark struck a nerve with Jiang Yinghe, who gave Chang Ye a push.

Naturally, Chang Ye could take a hint. He gave Tong Guiyu a look before transforming into a little white cat and jumping into Jiang Yinghe's arms.

Tong Guiyu praised as he watched from the side, "As expected of the devil king. You know when to advance and retreat and when to act soft or hard. You're truly tough, and with amazing endurance."

The more Jiang Yinghe listened, the more he suspected there was another meaning. He gave Tong Guiyu an admonishing look. "Did you come all the way here to make fun of me?"

"I wouldn't dare to." Tong Guiyu casually came in and took a seat at the table, looking around, "It's been more than three hundred and seventy years since my last visit to White Crane Jade Manor. After not meeting for so many years, how can you not even offer me a cup of tea?"

In the past, when he first started cultivating, Jiang Yinghe learned how to make tea and other matters. These tasks were gradually offloaded onto a spirit crane who could transform into a human. Then, when he started taking in disciples, Li Huanhan was put in charge.

At this point, Jiang Yinghe didn't even know where White Crane Jade Manor's tea leaves were, so where was he supposed to get Tong Guiyu tea?

Jiang Yinghe raised an eyebrow and said, "The tea here is far beneath the magnamious and renowned Tong Xianjun. How can I bear to serve it to you?"

Tong Guiyu heard the sarcasm and laughed without a care in the world. "I wondered why you had entered seclusion for a life threatening problem back then. Even Abbot Chan wasn't at that stage yet. Now you've even changed bodies."

As he said that, he raised his hand as if to touch Jiang Yinghe's forehead. Due to the influence of the devil core, there was a red mark there.

But he stopped halfway due to the scary looks the cat in Jiang Yinghe's arms was shooting at him. "Although I have guessed the identity of your disciples already, I still can't believe it sometimes. Those two books..."

Jiang Yinghe's face darkened. His gaze turned chilly. "Don't slander my disciples."

"How am I slandering them? This is an opportunity to educate the denizens of the cultivation world on intimate matters and broaden their horizons." Tong Guiyu smiled, "If you need any of the instruments mentioned in the book, I can give you a carriage worth of them."

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...That's not necessary."

He'd known Tong Guiyu since they were young adults, so Jiang Yinghe naturally knew all about this guy's playboy attitude and interests. He immediately rejected the offer before taking out the book 'The Days and Nights I spent with the Sword Saint' and going straight to the point.

"Jun-er told me that this book is based on Sword Saint Taichu."

Tong Guiyu read the title and nodded, "Yes. What, you're interested in that senior's story too?"

Jiang Yinghe sighed, "I'm afraid he's more interested in me."

The look in Tong Guiyu's eyes changed. He looked at Jiang Yinghe with great admiration, thinking for a moment before advising, "Three will do. This senior lived 10,000 years ago. Putting aside if he can revive like the devil king, I don't think you can handle a fourth..."

Jiang Yinghe blinked again. "...That's not what I meant."

"I understand, I understand." Tong Guiyu glanced at the kitten in the other man's arms. Now that Jiang Yinghe lost his cultivation, Tong Guiyu no longer had to worry about Wangchen being pointed at his throat, so he let loose without restraint, "Love is self-inflicted. Given your lack of desire, you must have been coaxed and forced by them to—"

"Tong Guiyu." Jiang Yinghe interrupted him grimly.

"Huh?"

"Who do you think can hit you harder, me or my disciple?"

"..."

Author's Corner

Tong Guiyu: L-Little He, let's use our words... QAQ.

Sahl

Tong Guiyu: Four might be too much.

Me: '...'

Me: 'Ohhhhh...'

OceanofPDF.com

CH63 - DUAL CULTIVATION (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

After Jiang Yinghe's thinly veiled threat, Tong Guiyu naturally did not dare to tease him any more. Instead, he picked up the book on the table and flipped through it. "Are you interested in him? Sword Saint Taichu...there are many anecdotes about him in He Huan Sect."

Jiang Yinghe asked, "What kind of anecdotes?"

Tong Guiyu looked at the kitten in his arms and said, "Did you know that he was already married when he became famous and that his cultivation partner died soon after?"

Jiang Yinghe nodded and unconsciously patted the cat's ears in his arms, rubbing his fingertips against the soft, fluffy fur.

"But most people only know half the story." Tong Guiyu paused on an illustrated page. "His cultivation partner was also a man of high status. Also, he didn't die young. Rather..."

He trailed off before slowly continuing. "He was like your three disciples, who were plagued with problems despite reaching the peak."

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment. Something about that statement seemed to resonate within his heart. He slowly covered his chest and wondered where this feeling came from. As he was about to ask further questions, Tong Guiyu spoke again.

"The so-called problems weren't related to cultivation. Actually, it was that he was unable to stay with the Sword Saint for long."

"...And why was that?"

Tong Guiyu shook his head and said, "That's all I know. The man's name is unknown and he disappeared quietly. If he hadn't left He Huan Sect as one of his legacies, few people would even know the man's gender."

Jiang Yinghe pondered for a moment. The tail of the white cat in his arms wrapped softly around his wrist, its fluff gently pressing against his palm.

As Jiang Yinghe slowly brushed the tail and sorted out the thoughts in his mind, he heard Tong Guiyu ask, "So what do you think?"

"What?"

"You and your disciple." Tong Guiyu couldn't help but take a look at the cat that was acting spoiled in his arms. It was hard to imagine that this was the famous devil king who had shaken the world ten thousand years ago...

He tactfully asked, "Do you really want to...do it...with three people..."

"You're mistaken."

Tong Guiyu was relieved, but at the same time he felt like his question missed the mark. He nodded, "That's what I thought. With your personality, there's no way you can accept three—"

"They are one person."

Tong Guiyu's eyes widened. He stared blankly at Jiang Yinghe, who looked calm before shifting his gaze to the cat.

Jiang Yinghe patiently explained the whole story.

Tong Guiyu's expression changed unpredictably as he listened. He went through several emotions before he understood everything. He sighed, "No wonder you hesitated. After their fusion, their memories might not remain.

And if this really is the creator of the world we're talking about, he likely has his own goals and won't be so susceptible to the influence of others."

He paused there, carefully observing Jiang Yinghe's expression before comforting him. "But if you can't figure out this matter, you will still fail to answer the Dao's questions, even if you cultivate again. It will not be as easy to harden your mind like you harden your body."

This was like taking your university entrance exams again. Even though you've already done it once and know how things go, it's still difficult to score higher than before without a breakthrough.

Jiang Yinghe knew this, but he was much more determined than before. "Even if there's the slightest chance, I'll take it. So be it if I fail to pass my heavenly tribulation."

Tong Guiyu sighed, "The world is really unpredictable. I never thought that a sword cultivator like you, with a clear mind and few desires, would be so troubled by love."

Halfway through, Jiang Yinghe sensed keenly that Tong Guiyu's words were tinged with his own sorrow. He pondered for a moment before asking, "How is your relationship with the cultivator from Yao Wang Valley?"

He was referring to Chou Yonghe, who had once entrusted a sword pendant to Tong Guiyu. When Jiang Yinghe met him, that man was dressed in turquoise robes and had a gentle demeanour, like a willow branch that could softly brush by a person's sleeve in the spring breeze.

Tong Guiyu looked at him and drew out the Hongyan sword.

There was a sharply contrasting pale pink peach crystal pendant on the hilt of this dual cultivation sword.

Hongyan loved beauty, so when it was presented to Jiang Yinghe, the blade chimed and trembled, emitting a feeling of endless joy.

Jiang Yinghe swept a glance at the hilt of the sword and said, "It seems that you've met him."

"...With the way I cultivate, how could I not?" Tong Guiyu said, "But we have just crossed paths and nothing more."

Jiang Yinghe knew why he was so worried. Tong Guiyu practiced the dual cultivation method of He Huan Sect. It involved balancing restraint and indulgence.

If he couldn't reciprocate Chou Yonghe's interest, it might be kinder to both of them if they didn't get together, rather than enjoying a brief moment of passion and being left with deep grudges.

Jiang Yinghe was exactly right.

The two of them, each with their own difficulties, were silent for a while. The only sound was the mewls of a cat, as his soft, prickly tongue licked Jiang Yinghe's fingers comfortingly.

Jiang Yinghe lowered his head and stroked the little white cat.

At the same time, the crane spirit outside the entrance door chirped leisurely again. The main door opened a sliver as a He Huan Sect disciple cupped his fists with a lowered head. "Acting Sect Master, this disciple comes on behalf of the sect. Elder Lin has exited seclusion and has matters to discuss with you."

"It's probably about some blessed lands and how to guide the disciples again. He's always going into seclusion with nothing to show for it." Tong Guiyu muttered impatiently. However, he still got up to take his leave.

Smiling at Jiang Yinghe, he said, "I will seek out Xuan Wei Xianjun for a spar once you have recovered your cultivation. Abbot Chan Qing is off limits, and you've been gone so long... Oh right, I'll send someone over with some toys from the books later."

"That's not necessary..."

"Don't be shy." Tong Guiyu said meaningfully, "You'll thank me when you get the chance to use them."

—-

He was true to his word.

Within half a day of Tong Guiyu's departure, He Huan Sect really did send some "gifts" to Qing Jing Peak in the name of cultural exchange. In addition to what he promised, the contents included a very high quality book on dual cultivation.

Jiang Yinghe was still nominally in seclusion because he hadn't recovered his cultivation yet, so he couldn't go out. So all these things were piled up in front of the White Crane Jade Manor until Jun-er returned and put them away.

This friend of his really made Jiang Yinghe's blood pressure shoot up and down like a rocket.

Not to mention the fact that Qin Jun seemed to be interested in those things. He took the book and studied it carefully for a long time... However, as the sky grew darker, some problems popped up in the Nether Realm, Qin Jun had to leave the White Crane Jade Manor to deal with them.

It was getting late. The remaining haze in the sky was the colour of blood.

In addition to cultivating, Jiang Yinghe also had to study the many techniques he had learned before reincarnating. He studied late into the night.

The little white cat beside him had already fallen sound asleep. His current body was more prone to getting tired, so Jiang Yinghe was close to dozing off too.

In his half-awake state, he didn't hear any footsteps, but he could detect a familiar presence approaching. Even the temperature around him warmed by a few degrees.

The candlelight brightened.

Jiang Yinghe looked up and saw that the candlewick had been trimmed. The flame now stood upright and gave off more light.

The warm light overflowed, illuminating the dark sleeves of the visitor and his gradually heating gaze.

"I told you it was harmful to your eyes." He said, "You never listen."

Since he was now a mortal, reading in the dark might actually hurt his eyes.

The candlelight reflected on the floor overlapped with the moonlight seeping in through the window.

Li Huanhan spoke calmly as usual, without any intention of blaming him. He stepped closer and slowly removed the book from Jiang Yinghe's hands. Marking the page he was on, he said, "Don't force yourself and rest on time."

Jiang Yinghe was feeling sleepy. But for some reason he felt like the other person was more and more like a virtuous wife. He gazed at him for a moment and said, "I'm not forcing myself and I'm not tired. I was just waiting for you."

Li Huanhan lowered his head, dark eyes the colour of blood regarded him, their depths as unfathomable as the sea.

"You're not tired? Is there something urgent to talk about then?"

Jiang Yinghe said, "Actually there are some, but I don't want to sleep because I have something to ask you."

Li Huanhan was taken aback, as if he couldn't think of any topic to ask so solemnly and specifically.

"What's wrong?"

Jiang Yinghe gazed into his eyes and said, "Is there any damage from...splitting your heart?"

Li Huanhan knew at once that he had seen Wangchen. He subconsciously replied, "No."

The other person immediately asked back, "Is that the truth?"

"..."

His slight silence told Jiang Yinghe everything he needed to know. He sighed and said, "I don't like your over willingness to sacrifice yourself, you know?"

Li Huanhan didn't reply immediately. Instead, he slowly came around and smoothed Jiang Yinghe's hair down.

"Sorry, I..."

His tone of voice was too soft, like melting ice.

Jiang Yinghe turned and loosely hugged him as he explained, "Just as you don't want to see me hurt, I don't want to see you hurt either, especially if it's because of me. There are many things that happened due to my late response, and I already feel guilty..."

Before he could finish, Li Huanhan took his wrist and pressed him down on the soft bed, silencing his lips with his own.

He always was the type to prefer expressing his emotions with actions than with words, just like right now. Jiang Yinghe could feel his unquenchable desire and fervour in the slow roll of his hips. He could also feel the subdued gentleness with which Li Huanhan enveloped his lips. Most of all, he could feel the other's desire to ravage him that was almost suppressed into nonexistence.

The world said Li Huanhan was a cruel tyrant with no regard for the sanctity of human lives.

But when he lowered his head for a kiss, it was both deep and passionate, gradually shifting from a tender starting point until Jiang Yinghe couldn't breathe.

A finger fondled his upper lip.

Jiang Yinghe looked at him, not knowing what to think for a moment.

Perhaps he really was tired from reading, or perhaps he was caught up in the moment after that dizzying kiss, but he gently took the initiative to kiss the finger placed between his lips.

While Li Huanhan was startled, Jiang Yinghe wrapped his arms behind the other man's neck and leaned in to plant a trail of kisses from his neck to the corner of his lips. It wasn't clear whether this was out of a desire to comfort or become intimate.

The purification status bar provided by the system was the least of Jiang Yinghe's worries right now. Naturally, he didn't notice the instantaneous changes in Li Huanhan's status bar.

He was indeed very easy to coax.

Jiang Yinghe kissed him and whispered, "Don't do this kind of thing again."

He was referring to splitting his heart. Although it allowed him to protect Jiang Yinghe and come to his side, it harmed Li Huanhan as well.

"...Alright."

The voice delivered to his ears was low, hoarse, and stilted. Li Huanhan pressed Jiang Yinghe tightly against the bed with his hard, heated body, like he intended to go further.

Jiang Yinghe wasn't prepared for this development. He grew embarrassed at the extended contact. Clutching his lapels, he hid behind a very appropriate excuse.

"The condition of my body...isn't good." He implored, "It's only mortal. You'll break it."

Just as he finished speaking, the system that has been silently observing the whole time popped up with a voice message.

"You can use your hands or your legs."

...What a dirty-minded system.

Jiang Yinghe was surprised to suddenly receive a new task from the unification system.

"Unification Task 1: Dual cultivate with the Innate True Nature."

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...D-dual cultivate?"

Unfortunately, he was so astonished that he said those two words out loud.

Li Huanhan lowered his head, his breath warming Jiang Yinghe's neck. His vividly red eyes stared at Shizun as he spoke in a low and raspy voice.

"...What did you just say?"

Author's Corner

Tongtong: See, I told you you'll thank me later! Aren't I a little genius?!

HeHe: ...Take your little yellow book and get the hell out.

Rain: That system is looking real sus

Sahl: Well then. That escalated quickly.

OceanofPDF.com

CH64 - TRAITOROUS AND BULLYING WRETCHES (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

This chapter is 'behind closed doors' – so we don't get anything too explicit. Sahl has spiced it up a little so it's mildly NSFW. You will lose nothing of the story by skipping this chapter if you so wish.

—-

The situation was too dangerous.

Although Jiang Yinghe was inexperienced, he could still sense the change in Li Huanhan's tone.

For some reason, he had a subtle premonition of danger.

"No, actually..."

Before he could say anything, he was kissed again by Li Huanhan. The other's breath grew warmer as it approached, almost engulfing Jiang Yinghe entirely.

Li Huanhan's lips were slightly cold, but his movements were gentle enough. Jiang Yinghe was momentarily entranced by his tender actions and did not push him away. It was only when the other party began to explore his mouth with his tongue and steal away his breath that he reacted and called out quietly.

"Huanhan..."

His faltering voice was breathy and wavering at the end, finishing with an airy note that was like an unintentional tease.

The blood red eyes in front of him deepened in colour as the other person hummed deeply in response.

Jiang Yinghe only discovered now that Huanhan had gently untied the sash of his shirt at some point. His hands slid into Jiang Yinghe's robes and wrapped tightly around his waist. But before things could progress further, the candles and lamps in the room suddenly started to burn with blue phosphorus flames. A thick fog radiating resentful energy quickly spread to his side.

Qin Jun had returned to the White Crane Jade Manor.

He left for the Nether Realm before to attend to his internal affairs, only to return to such a scene. He rushed to Jiang Yinghe at top speed.

Qin Jun seemed to think that he had come at a very opportune time as his form emerged from the mist. That pair of gray eyes showed no hint of his emotions as he shot a glance at Li Huanhan.

"So the guard is into embezzlement." Qin Jun's voice rang out from behind Jiang Yinghe.

His words were addressed to Li Huanhan. Immediately after, Jiang Yinghe felt Jun-er's icy cold hand encircle his waist from behind to tightly grasp his fingers.

A slightly hot breath swept across his neck as Qin Jun lowered his head to Jiang Yinghe's shoulder and inhaled. His voice was tinged with slight dissatisfaction, "Li Huanhan is always full of...flowery words. He might speak like he's the most gentlemanly, but he acts more out of line than any of us."

The duo were less than half a meter apart, with one Jiang Yinghe crushed between them.

"Shizun," Jun-er called to him quietly, "is he the only one you're willing to favour?"

His remarks demonstrated a bit of resonance with Chang Ye's emotions.

Jiang Yinghe was stunned by his question. Then he remembered that this apprentice was not so spoiled and hastily said, "My body is still too fragile..."

Before he could bring up this convenient excuse again, Jun-er squeezed his fingers. A cold current penetrated into his body. It seemed like a physique enhancing spell.

Jiang Yinghe shuddered out a breath. "..."

How cruel.

Qin Jun wasn't the only one being unforgiving. Even his ruthless System wordlessly popped up with a second unification task, which was to dual cultivate with the Acquired Mentality.

Jiang Yinghe's hair was brushed away by Qin Jun's cool fingers. Lips pressed onto his mouth from the side.

...Looks like I might have the opportunity to complete two tasks at once.

But he would prefer not to have them both inside him at the same time, if possible.

As the atmosphere became more tense and ambiguous, a fluffy tail hooked around Jiang Yinghe's ankle.

He shifted his eyes and saw Chang Ye, along with the two beast ears sticking out of his head.

"Shizun..." he said, having woken up sometime prior, "Actually, I also want to..."

Chang Ye flicked his tail, as if embarrassed. His long, plush tail sweetly wrapped around Jiang Yinghe's ankle and rubbed back and forth.

Right after he spoke, the System dutifully issued a third unification task. Not surprising at all, it was also about dual cultivation.

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "..."

What kind of trash system is this? Can't I uninstall it??

Jiang Yinghe sighed deeply and looked at the three split souls of his target. He lamented the deep animosity heaven was showing him.

—-

Early the next morning...

There was a brisk spring breeze circling the mountain, with few birds about. The spirit cranes outside the entrance chirped.

The candles inside were about to burn out. Sunlight hazily peeked through the window, falling on the side of his cheek.

This thin morning light seemed to be as pale as falling snow, softly highlighting the pale frost hue of his skin.

Jiang Yinghe opened his eyes in a slight daze.

He was still somewhat out of it, with his mind in disarray. The first thing he touched was the soft, white cat in his arms.

White...cat?

...A cat with backward barbs.

Those five words had been deeply engraved into his mind last night. Jiang Yinghe expressionlessly looked at this soft, fluffy kitty for a moment, before shoving him out of his arms.

This cat was a real jerk.

Jiang Yinghe cursed in his heart, as he was too wrung out to speak. When he tried to turn over, his body protested something fierce, like someone had taken his bones apart, put them on the ground and run over them ten times with a truck before putting them back.

Last night, one of those bastards tried to convince him that it would feel much better if he was prepared properly. In the end, after copious preparation from various hands sliding into and stretching that most intimate part of his body, he was dizzy after just one round. After that...well. Let's just say that his waist ached so much that he couldn't move today.

His disciples were all lying, smooth-talking beasts.

After being unceremoniously pushed away, the little white cat also opened his eyes with some confusion. When he saw his Shizun turning away sternly, Chang Ye immediately remembered what he'd done yesterday. While acting cute and pitiful, he guiltily moved his paws in Jiang Yinghe's direction.

When Jiang Yinghe managed to turn over, he saw another deceitful beast.

Qin Jun was fully clothed and only his outer robe was missing, so it was obvious he had been awake for sometime. Or perhaps he had never slept at all, spending the remainder of the night arguing with Li Huanhan using their divine senses.

Jiang Yinghe took one look at him before closing his eyes again. He had no intention of moving himself for the moment, especially not his waist.

What dual cultivation techniques... There was way too much force being used near the end by all three of them.

The words of evil cultivators really were untrustworthy. They had promised him that there would only be one round, then each of them fucking took a turn. Even more unforgivable, they all had inhuman stamina and went well over an hour!

Jiang Yinghe's mind was still clouded with fatigue as he thought about the slide into his aroused body of thick, hard lengths, the glide of hands across his most sensitive places, the press of mouths on his skin . Then Qin Jun's hand pressed on his waist and slowly massaged the area to ease the pain.

"Are you still uncomfortable?" Qin Jun leaned over and kissed his eyelashes, "Shizun, I was wrong. I didn't think you would agree and I-we couldn't control ourselves. This will be the last time, I promise..."

"...Shut up."

Jiang Yinghe's voice was very hoarse. Despite only saying two words, there was something off about his tone.

So you only think about that now? Then what was running through your head yesterday when you pinned me down on the bed?

Jiang Yinghe had already made it clear that he couldn't go on, that his body was about to reach its limits.

However, Qin Jun was way too good at that dual cultivation technique of his. Although Jiang Yinghe felt like he couldn't take it anymore, his cultivation and spiritual energy continued to rise at a rapid pace, thousands of times faster than the righteous techniques he used in his first life. In just one night, his body and foundation was rebuilt.

Jiang Yinghe's ice and snow path body was cold, and by definition so was Qin Jun's body. However, the heat generated from friction caused by that hot length inside him almost literally burned his brains out. He could slowly try to cooperate in the beginning, but in the end he was completely overwhelmed and didn't even know he was shedding tears.

The problem was that even crying didn't spare him.

The more the corners of Jiang Yinghe's eyes reddened, the more tears that fell from his inky eyes and the more overstimulated he appeared, the more excited the other person became. He pressed on, with no signs of letting up.

My disciples are all so wicked... They're all traitorous and bullying wretches...

He was still too soft on them. Jiang Yinghe's resolve to be a strict teacher firmed once again.

This 'strict teacher' buried himself into the bedding without a word. He let Qin Jun rub his waist and apologize, but he didn't want to look at him right now.

Last night went too far. Too far!

The more Jiang Yinghe wanted to sleep, the less sleepy he became. The quiet and weak purrs of the cat by his ear became clearer before being replaced by Chang Ye's voice.

"Shizun, don't be angry..."

Chang Ye whispered into his ear, "I'll retract the barbs next time. I didn't know that they would stop me from pulling out either..."

Jiang Yinghe turned to give him a cool look. His voice was hoarse. "Fuck off and get neutered."

Qin Jun nodded in agreement. "Right, right, right. You need to be neutered. Since Shizun doesn't like them, what if those barbs remain after we reunify —"

"That includes you."

Qin Jun's words came to a screeching halt. Only after a long time did he cough and say, "...On second thought, this doesn't sound like a good idea."

He slowly rubbed Shizun's waist as his gaze slid down the length of Jiang Yinghe's neck, taking in the mottled red marks on his skin. When he reached his undergarment, Qin Jun recalled how many marks were concealed inside, before looking away.

Jiang Yinghe didn't say anything for a long time. When he regained some semblance of composure, he tried to get up to start his morning routine. However, his body ached even more once he got up, so he had no choice but to lay back down.

He silently stared at the culprits hovering around him.

He didn't even want to waste his breath on them. Each one was more of a bastard than the last. The good looks of these clothed beasts were wasted on them.

As he thought that, a cup of warm tea with throat soothing medicine was handed to him.

Jiang Yinghe didn't need to look to know it was from Li Huanhan. He took a few sips and slowly exhaled, "All of you, leave and don't bother me for the next two days."

Right after his anger-laced words, Li Huanhan leaned down and pressed a kiss to his brow, apologising quietly, "It won't hurt in the future. Those two were too fierce, I couldn't stop them."

As soon as the words left his mouth, Qin Jun immediately frowned. "Fierce? Me? I told you so many times to be gentle, but you ignored me and kept thrusting. Now you're saying I'm the fierce one? Li Huanhan, what were you doing when I told you that Shizun was crying, huh?"

He didn't hide his hostility at all as his anger rose exponentially. Chang Ye spang up indignantly to fan the flames. "Qin-shixiong is right! How can you just omit how forceful you were and how deep you went, and blame it all on my barbs? Besides, I'm not as..."

Chang Ye originally wanted to say that he wasn't as long as Li Huanhan, but on second thought that seemed to imply that his was short.

"...Not as impulsive as you."

Li Huanhan ignored them. He quietly asked Jiang Yinghe, "May I apply medicine to your injuries?"

His injuries were all in a very private location, but Jiang Yinghe wasn't as embarrassed because the other person was his own disciple. He simply said, "Just leave the medicine here."

Huanhan was silent for a few moments, before nodding and setting down the medicine. He attentively reminded, "Refine the spiritual energy left in your body quickly. Otherwise, it will affect your recovery."

Jiang Yinghe nodded as he adjusted his collar. "Alright, you all go out first. I'll rest by myself for two days in the White Crane Jade Manor. Don't come and bother me."

He remembered something else. Turning, he fished out Chang Ye, who had turned back into a cat to try and weasel his way into the blanket. After casually tossing him out, Jiang Yinghe said coldly, "Don't pretend to be a cat. You shouldn't come to act spoiled either."

As his annoyance became more distinct, Qin Jun and Li Huanhan called a temporary truce. They seemed to have an entire conversation in a few glances, like there was a secret code that only split souls knew. Neither insisted on staying and left with a few soothing words. Of course, they didn't forget to take away the green tea cat that was steadfastly crawling towards the bed as well.

Only after the inner room had quietened down did Jiang Yinghe sigh in relief. He took a few more sips of tea and contemplated the unification progress bar provided by the system.

Just last night, while he was being bullied into a dazed, disorganised mess that whimpered unconsciously, the original blackened status bars had inadvertently been emptied entirely, leaving only this unification progress bar.

When it first appeared, it was at ten percent. Now that he looked at it again this morning, it suddenly became eleven percent.

It was far too easy to link this progress to the events of last night. Jiang Yinghe couldn't help but feel that this system was becoming more and more inappropriate and racy.

This kind of progress bar didn't seem to mesh with his core values.

Jiang Yinghe silently took another sip of tea. The medicinal additions within were beginning to take effect. He felt like his throat was less sore than before, and his voice was returning to normal after crying out so much last night. Only then did he glance at the medicine Li Huanhan had left behind.

The bottle was made of exquisite, cold, white porcelain. It was covered with a light gold pattern of mandarin duck pairs. There were no labels attached, but a familiar mark was imprinted on the bottom. A complicated script was engraved in the centre of the mark.

Jiang Yinghe took a closer look and saw that it read:

He Huan Sect's secret formula.

Jiang Yinghe stared. "..."

Given your sect's corporate culture and areas of interest, I'm surprised there's actually something that's kept under wraps like this...

Though Jiang Yinghe had to admit it made sense that pill refinement formulas were not made public.

However, since this medicine was made by He Huan Sect, it made people very assured of its efficacy. Jiang Yinghe pulled out the stopper and poured out some of the dew-like substance inside. He would start with the areas he could see.

There were a series of teeth marks on the inside of his calf. The teeth were very sharp, so they were probably from Chang Ye. The wound was quite irritated, like it had been licked repeatedly by a cat.

A ring of bruises faintly surrounded his ankle... Jiang Yinghe had some impression of how this came to be. When he couldn't take anymore, he shifted from under Li Huanhan's heavy thrusts, only for him to drag him back, hooking Jiang Yinghe's ankle over his shoulder so he could go even deeper into that tight place. Jiang Yinghe was so overstimulated at that point that his bones were like putty. He didn't even have the strength to retreat under the erotic assault.

Jiang Yinghe calmly applied the medicine, thinking that all children were clumsy their first time. What was the point of being angry with them...? It was normal for them to not know their strength as they grasped his waist and bent him over... Leaving hickies all over his body could also be...

He stiffened when he touched the lustful bite marks on the inside of his thighs.

...Which one of those beasts was responsible for this?

Frowning, Jiang Yinghe rubbed at them some more.

It didn't hurt, but...

After applying the medicine to all the areas he could see, he created an ice mirror and used it to examine what lay beneath his undergarment, between his legs.

After a moment of silence, he set the medicine bottle aside and expressionlessly put his clothes back on.

Abstinence, abstinence was definitely the way to go.

Was it too late for him to switch to cultivating the Emotionless Path at this point?

No, even that wasn't enough.

He had to become a monk.

Author's Corner

HeHe: I'm on the verge of becoming a monk.

Abbot: Please don't come over qaq

Sahl:

I did my best to add hot spices to this chapter – it's disappointing the author couldn't include more, ahem, 'detail' as I think it would have been both sexy, funny and sweet. Hope you guys enjoyed the chapter for what it was and aren't too disappointed at Shizun's first time with his disciples. (I honestly thought we'd get an aborted attempt or be waiting until they were one person – was totally not expecting a ménage a quatre). 😏

OceanofPDF.com

CH65 - THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe's wish to become a monk did not come true.

He spent the next 2-3 days recovering from the majority of his injuries before he allowed others to come over.

With the gradual refinement of the accumulated aura in his body and the aid of the half demon core, Jiang Yinghe's cultivation progressed at a rapid pace. It was like he was reviewing what he had already learned. Not only did he make great progress, he also had a chance to brush up on the techniques he had not practiced to their fullest the first time around.

After these two or three days, the little white cat was the first to break. He lay outside the door every day, scratching at it and mewling pitifully.

Jiang Yinghe had severe back pain for the first two days, so he ignored the annoying cries. After his body began to heal, his heart started to soften.

When he was looking at the broken fragments of Wangchen and thinking about how to recast it, he heard a certain kitty meow as he squeezed his way in.

Jiang Yinghe moved, but he did not shoo the little cat out. Instead, he ignored the cat as it tentatively made its way towards him, jumped on the table and started acting spoiled beside him.

The very pretty cat that Chang Ye turned into had a bright and pure white coat and round black eyes. After its fluffy fur brushed against him, Jiang

Yinghe's resolve softened by 80%. He sighed softly and took hold of the kitten's ear.

"All you do is act cute and spoiled." He reprimanded expressionlessly, "Why aren't you this obedient when it matters?"

Jiang Yinghe picked the cat up and put it on his lap, paying it no more attention. He reached out to brush against the broken edge of Wangchen. It stirred up memories of the Dao's questioning during his heavenly lightning tribulation.

If he could not answer this question, it would be difficult for him to successfully pass any tests of mentality in the future.

His devotion to the Dao and his own morality were already indestructible, he just needed persevere and face his own feelings. Being reincarnated has not affected Jiang Yinghe's devotion to the Dao. On the contrary, he was even more certain of what he felt inside.

It no longer mattered if the unified body would acknowledge their bond. He was determined to see things through.

What he worked hard to get, and what he worked hard but could not get, could both be considered opportunities to improve himself, so he could become more mature and seasoned.

Jiang Yinghe carefully surveyed the lightning residue on the blade, and envisioned many ways to recast it in his mind. However, as he was inexperienced in refining artifacts, he felt that many of his ideas were flawed.

While Jiang Yinghe was somewhat occupied, the cat in his lap skilfully found a safe and comfortable position. His fluffy tail swirled and looped around his wrist, as if signalling 'come and touch me'.

The words 'flirty goblin' inexplicably came to Jiang Yinghe's mind. He was just about to give into the temptation when he remembered the cat's backward barbs.

Although Tianhou was not a feline, his appearance and habits were very similar. At first, the soft thorns were only painful because they scraped against his insides, but later they became stuck. Even more shocking, a knot formed at the base. Most of Jiang Yinghe's inflammation and swelling was 'thanks' to him.

Jiang Yinghe stopped his hand and continued ignoring the little cat's actions.

But Chang Ye's entrance seemed to be a signal of sorts. Another person soon knocked on the door, entering after Jiang Yinghe hummed in response. He didn't need to look up to sense that Li Huanhan had come.

Qin Jun rarely knocked. Li Huanhan was the only one who would knock once in a while, but more often than not he entered silently. Regardless of the time of day, he was able to enter and leave without a sound.

"Shizun," Li Huanhan sat next to Jiang Yinghe, his gaze sweeping over the cat in his arms without any change, "I went back to the Tian Mo School to search for records related to Sword Saint Taichu. These are the only things I found."

He placed a jade slip on the table. It contained a copy of all the related information within the Tian Mo School's records.

Even though both he and Qin Jun had some speculations, those were only guesses and might not be true. It was necessary to let Jiang Yinghe confirm them himself.

This news interested Jiang Yinghe. He took the jade slip on the table and held it in his palm, his divine sense sweeping through to examine the information within.

The vast majority was stuff that he had already seen. Within the few bits of new information, the most reliable source seemed to be a section from 'The Sword Cultivator's Book of Genesis', where the Sword Saint said, "I am not of this world."

Jiang Yinghe had no doubts that he was dealing with a senior transmigrator from the blue pearl of the solar system, Earth. A planet that had nothing to do with the cultivation world.

"Well?" Li Huanhan asked, "Were any of Shizun's questions answered?"

Jiang Yinghe said helplessly, "I already know everything in here."

Li Huanhan stared at him for a moment before suddenly saying, "How did Shizun learn about it?"

Jiang Yinghe's words came to an abrupt halt.

How did he know? Naturally, the incantations and handwriting in the Sword Saint's old residence... He had only just made this connection when he heard another question.

"The Sword Saint said he was not from this world, so what about Shizun?"

The question was asked softly, like a slowly dispersing wisp of smoke after cooking. Yet it was inexplicably heavy as well.

Jiang Yinghe's mind went blank, as he was suddenly confronted with the deepest secret in his heart.

He hesitated for a moment and slowly said, "Let me think about how to tell you..."

He was already basically admitting it with those words.

The look in Li Huanhan's eyes did not change. He inched closer and closer, his blood red gaze profound and unpredictable. His eyes were as deep and as still as bottomless pools of water.

"Is Shizun not from this world either?"

The strings in Jiang Yinghe's heart were all thrown into disarray by his words. He was silent for a moment before sighing, "...How did you know?"

"I once heard Qin Jun mention that Shizun was easily able to recite the incantation inscribed on the entrance to the Sword Saint's old residence... This person was alive ten thousand years ago, before even Chang Ye's time." Li Huanhan lifted his right hand to grasp Jiang Yinghe's lower jaw, his palm pressed against the other's smoothly defined jawbone.

He kissed him very lightly on the lips.

Jiang Yinghe was so stunned by the kiss that he couldn't even continue with his words.

"Shizun has expended much effort to gather information about him." Li Huanhan's voice was quiet and pleasant, but it contained traces of urgency and restraint. "Is it because you want to go back?"

These words poked at the oldest, most hidden shame buried in Jiang Yinghe's heart.

His decision to take in disciples was due in large part to his desire to return to Earth... There was nothing here for him. Even if he became sentimental after living here for a millenia, this was not his home.

What's more, he didn't know if the flow of time between the two worlds was the same. If it was different, perhaps he would be able to see his loved ones again when he returned... This was the last bit of hope he held onto other than his soul returning to his homeland.

Jiang Yinghe didn't know how to answer for a moment. He just stared back, watching how blood-colored tides surged and fell in Li Huanhan's eyes.

"Shizun wants to leave." This time, the words were definitive.

Only the Dao Ancestor could break through the void to reach other worlds. If he wanted to go home, there were only two paths to take. One was to complete the system's mission. The system had always promised to send him home as a reward.

The other was to conquer the many severe restrictions on the road to the Dao and reach the peak.

And his disciples were once the person who created this world. It was very likely that Dao Ancestor would grant Jiang Yinghe's small wish and send him home, even if he didn't want to acknowledge their love.

Jiang Yinghe was unable to retort. He could only feel the other's emotions gradually distort. He frowned gently, but before he could say anything, Li Huanhan's grip on his jaw immediately loosened.

"My apologies," his voice was a little strained, "did I hurt you?"

Jiang Yinghe shook his head. "I...do want to go back, very much so."

The atmosphere was flash frozen. Even the air became suffocating.

It was at this moment that another voice broke the silence.

"Then it is better for Shizun not to look for news about him."

The disciple who didn't knock much coalesced and appeared from the candle. The candle wick behind him automatically ignited with an eerie blue phosphorus flame.

Qin Jun took a few steps forward, pulling up a chair and sitting down. "I'm afraid that even if Sword Saint Taichu could revive, there's still no hope of leaving."

Jiang Yinghe did not reply to his words at first. He glanced over his shoulder at the candlestick. "Why light a candle in the middle of the day?"

Qin Jun took his hand in his and laughed, "To grab your attention so you'll glance my way."

His direct and bold statement was enough to overwhelm a person. Jiang Yinghe coughed lightly twice, pinching his reddened ears. "You just said that...there's no hope of leaving. Why?"

"Because—"

"Qin Jun." Li Huanhan interrupted, "You—"

"Li-shixiong," Qin Jun rarely addressed him this way. It was enough for Li Huanhan to pause, "You worry too much. Even Sword Saint Taichu's mystery deceased spouse would be afraid."

Qin Jun then turned to look at Jiang Yinghe. "Shizun."

"En?"

"Have you ever thought that you...might be the reincarnation of the Sword Saint? Or like us, a fragment of the original?"

Thunder rained down from the clear sky.

Jiang Yinghe, who had already been reincarnated once, felt his mind become clear, as if a gale had blown away the fog inside. He suddenly realized that this would explain Qin Jun's theory about him.

He was silent for a moment. "But...I don't have any of those memories."

This was similar to how Jiang Yinghe was currently unable to clearly remember the events of his past life. After becoming a fetus again, he required someone else's help to recover his memories. That was, unless he prepared measures in advance like the three of them before they were killed by their tribulations.

For example, Li Huanhan had countless blood pools. Even if Heavenly Lightning was to destroy 90% of them, he could still rely on the remaining ones to come back to life in a prepared body.

The cocoon that Qin Jun left in the Ghost City remained sealed for many years as it accumulated energy in order to fashion a temporary body and revive his soul.

Chang Ye chose an even simpler method. He sealed himself in ice on the Frozen Plains, not even bothering to change bodies.

"Perhaps your memories can no longer be recovered." Qin Jun mused, "Shizun woke up too late. Those who lived in the Sword Saint's era have long since fallen."

"But maybe..."

He paused suddenly and looked at Li Huanhan, then at the yawning white cat in Jiang Yinghe's arms. "...After the fusion, we will be from the same era as Sword Saint Taichu...right?"

Jiang Yinghe looked hopeful. "...After you fuse, you should also be able to send me home."

Li Huanhan was already very sensitive to any mention of Jiang Yinghe's departure. After hearing the word "home", his tone became more forceful. "We'll be going with you."

Jiang Yinghe blinked. "...Okay."

Li Huanhan's emotions eased up significantly with his agreement.

Jiang Yinghe sorted out the thoughts in his head. He still felt that something didn't make sense. After thinking for a moment, he spoke, "Apart from that, there's something I want to tell you..."

Author's Corner

I got tired while writing today... The word count is a bit low. Enough talk, I'm going to sleep zzzzzz

Sahl

...Jiang Yinghe casually brings OP boyfriend/s back to Earth...

Rain

I'm pretty sure I've read a BL novel with that plot a while back. I think it was called 'A Wave of Exes Came Looking for Me. What to Do?'

OceanofPDF.com

CH66 - LI HUANHAN APPEARS CALM, LITTLE SHIDI ACTS CUTE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

In the wake of Jiang Yinghe's words, the two people in front of him both held their breaths and glanced at each other.

There were some worries remaining in Jiang Yinghe's heart, but he felt that his disciples had the right to know. He thought about where to start. Slowly, he said, "The world I originally lived in was very different from this one. I was just an average person who was somehow transported here."

"The reason I have been cultivating diligently for a millennia, other than to prolong my life, was to..."

"A system came with me to this world. It told me that if I could become one with the Dao, I would be able to return to my original world."

Jiang Yinghe was afraid they wouldn't understand a modern term like 'system'. He quickly added, "It's like an intelligent artifact."

The way Li Huanhan looked at him did not change. The man nodded gently, but it was impossible to tell if he truly understood. His eyes remained fixed on Jiang Yinghe's face the whole time, without even the slightest tremor.

Jiang Yinghe was already a little ashamed. He found it even harder to continue after being looked at like that. He took a moment to speak, "The

other way I could go home would be to take you all as my disciples and raise you to become talents."

Qin Jun repeated his words thoughtfully, "Raise us...to become talents?"

Jiang Yinghe realized how ridiculous this system's selections were once he said that aloud. The people it had chosen were already peerless geniuses, with achievements that were unparalleled in the past and present. It seemed that the so-called 'lack of qualifications' was just a superficial excuse, and that the system was after the three of them all along.

Not to mention 'the education of sex, love and death' it once talked about, as well as the changes to the system after Jiang Yinghe's reincarnation.

It was like this thing wasn't here to be of service to him. Its true goal was more likely facilitating the reunification of the split souls...

Could the system be one of the arrangements left by the one who had created the world?

After connecting the dots, Jiang Yinghe coldly called for the system in his mind. That damned thing continued to play dead.

He sighed and continued to explain, "That's right. This was part of the reason I took you all as my disciples in the first place."

He had confessed all his secrets now. As he waited for the duo's reactions, he heard the soft and cute purr of a cat.

When Jiang Yinghe looked down at what he thought would be a small white cat, a red-robed youth jumped into his arms, asking warmly, "What were the other reasons?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't expect him to have listened so carefully. When he tried to speak, Chang Ye sealed his lips with a kiss.

The words Jiang Yinghe wanted to say became stuck in his throat. Then this little beast circled his arms around his waist. Chang Ye's lips parted an inch, and the surroundings became flooded with a luscious fragrance.

"Was it because you liked me that you—"

Kitty Chang Ye also only got half a sentence out before a hand jerked him back by his collar.

With a smile on his lips, Qin Jun grabbed his collar and pulled him off Shizun. Qin Jun then let go, making sure to step on that mischievous and fluffy tail in the process. Although he didn't use much force, it was enough so that his little shidi couldn't break free.

With a jerk of his tail, Chang Ye sat down and stared up into a pair of grey eyes. He unconsciously licked his sharp devil beast canines. "What are you trying to do?"

Qin Jun said casually, "Like Shizun once said, I'm being morally responsible and keeping it PG. Actually, I'm doing you a favour. Any further and Li Huanhan's going to beat you up."

Chang Ye turned to look at Li Huanhan, who was seated on the other chair. The heavenly demon really was surrounded by demonic energy and tapping his fingers on the armrests, his expression cold and flat. There was even a bit of frustration and unexplainable hostility in his furrowed brows.

After cutting his devil core in two, Chang Ye's cultivation had fallen by two minor realms. This tiny difference was enough for the two to manhandle him, throwing him around by his collar or the scruff of his neck in his cat form.

It was way too humiliating.

Chang Ye secretly grit his teeth and pulled his tail out from under Qin Jun's feet. As he held his plush tail to clean it and comb the fluffy fur, he heard Jiang Yinghe's voice.

"En...it wasn't because I liked you guys."

The atmosphere became slightly stagnant, and even Chang Ye could see Li Huanhan's red eyes starting to glow with an overwhelmingly bloodthirsty

and cold light.

He didn't doubt for a moment that if Shizun were to say a few words about disliking him, Li Huanhan's fragile heart and brain would immediately start to lose control. He definitely wouldn't be able to stop this guy alone.

Chang Ye glanced at Qin Jun. He was slightly relieved to see that Qin-shixiong was also keeping an eye on Li Huanhan.

Normal people like us shouldn't underestimate lunatics.

Jiang Yinghe didn't speak again until Chang Ye became slightly nervous. Taking a sip of his tea, he said, "The other reason was because of how pitiable you all were."

The sharp aura surrounding Li Huanhan immediately subsided. Even the other two froze as well for a moment.

"The cultivation of those with the heavenly demon physique is full of hardships. I also heard that the other disciples of our sect were picking on you. En, how pitiful." Jiang Yinghe thought back to those days, his thoughts slowly clearing as he looked out the window at the light rain.

"Those who are corrupted by countless spirits have extremely weakened bodies. It is widely known that they are prone to dying an early death. En, how pitiful."

Li Huanhan's expression changed slightly. He no longer gave off an oppressive feeling, leaving only silent contemplation.

Qin Jun even raised a hand to cover his face, coughing gently a few times. He looked down at his feet.

The same thought surfaced in the minds of both people—

I'm screwed. Why is Shizun bringing up my past deceptions? How am I supposed to make it up to him?

Jiang Yinghe slowly took another sip of tea before looking at Chang Ye, who was planning to turn into a cat when he realized what was happening. Shizun took hold of his tail and began to roll the big fluffy thing between his fingers. "You were captured and kept captive in a half-dead state inside a frozen cave with half your face disfigured and your meridians damaged. How very pitiful."

Chang Ye let him play with his tail. He felt even more awkward than the other two. He whispered, "But I really was half-dead..."

Luckily, he only offered a single retort before obediently closing his mouth. Chang Ye padded over and used his beast ears and plush tail to nuzzle and charm Shizun.

Jiang Yinghe nodded and continued to ask, "That disfigurement of yours, care to explain?"

According to Jiang Yinghe's guess, this level of disfigurement should have originated from a fierce battle.

Chang Ye touched his mask. "It's a curse from the previous battle with the Demon God. Actually...it's not a wound."

Jiang Yinghe was stunned for a moment, not expecting that to be the cause. He subconsciously inquired, "What kind of curse?"

Chang Ye's tail slowly hooked around Shizun's wrist as he recalled, "At that time, Hundun was already at his limits with one foot in the grave. His apocalyptic rage led him to casting this curse. With it, I can only...receive half of the love I otherwise would."

In a way, the curse and his disfigurement were very closely related. Only half of his beauty remained, making his face the most perfect and cruel contrast in the world.

Jiang Yinghe was silent. He was about to comfort him when he heard Chang Ye muttering in a low voice, "He's obviously not practiced casting this curse. He only took away a third..."

Jiang Yinghe stared. "..."

The bit of heartache and affection that welled up in his heart was immediately swept away. He pulled off the tail wrapped around his wrist, saying expressionlessly, "So it seems that none of you are pitiful. Every one of you is stronger than the last, but you decided to keep me in the dark. Even if you have the face to call me Shizun, I do not have the face to respond."

As a shizun, he didn't focus much on imparting swordsmanship. Instead, he sought to improve the moral character of his disciples through literature, potentially changing evil cultivators into pillars of the righteous path.

As Jiang Yinghe thought of this, he took another glance at the progress of this unification system in his mind. Unsurprisingly, it remained at 11%, as if the time he had spent with his disciples recently was all for naught.

This wasn't only a matter of whether he could go home at this point, but also a matter of whether he could accept his lovers' advances openly... Three was definitely impossible for sure. Doing it once was enough to leave him half-dead, and that was with Qin Jun fortifying his body with spells.

While Jiang Yinghe was thinking about this, a cold hand suddenly grasped his fingers.

He looked up and saw that Qin Jun had come closer to him at some point. The wraith had a serious look in his eyes. "Jun-er has never forgotten the kindness Shizun showed by taking him in. Why don't I help you in recovering your cultivation?"

"You...?"

One word was enough for Jiang Yinghe to read the answer in the other party's eyes—dual cultivation. The only way he could get help from others was through dual cultivation, and the more powerful his partner was, the better.

Jiang Yinghe stopped talking to give him a look. "What help is that? Even if I have condensed my foundation, I still can't afford to toss around with you guys."

Qin Jun came over and kissed him, whispering, "Just me."

Just...him?

Jiang Yinghe easily faltered.

He thought for a moment before asking again, "Can you manage the other two?"

Qin Jun gently squeezed his shoulders and sealed his following questions with a kiss. He waited until Jiang Yinghe needed to catch his breath before licking those slightly reddened lips. His voice was quiet and hoarse. "I can. Don't be afraid."

Just as Jiang Yinghe was hesitating, he was picked up by Qin Jun by his waist and brought from the table straight over to the bed.

A few steps away, Li Huanhan remained sitting and even rewarmed the cold tea, mixing it with throat soothing medicine.

Chang Ye looked at Qin Jun's back and then at Li Huanhan beside him. He couldn't help but send his divine sense over, "What did he say to you?"

Li Huanhan continued to add medicine without change. "We're all part of the same person, yet you don't even have this level of tacit understanding?"

Chang Ye choked, feeling very oppressed.

—-

Rather than suppressed, Jiang Yinghe felt like he was being very much bullied.

What was it Qin Jun said? That it would be 'just him'?

Bullshit. The three of them were originally one person.

By the time Jiang Yinghe thought of this, it was already the next morning.

He reflected deeply on how he was lured into bed again.

The other party obviously didn't want to give him time to think. He shifted to hug Jiang Yinghe another way while slowly massaging his waist and leaning in to kiss the corner of his lips.

Jiang Yinghe's mind hadn't caught up yet. Thinking back on it, he's spent much of his time lately doing nothing but resting. Then after recuperating for several days, he would be injured again in a moment.

Hiss...how painful.

The skin must have broken there.

As a strong, independent, millennia-old sword cultivator...

He couldn't take it anymore, again.

All the strength had left his body as he lay in bed and choked back tears.

Someone gently kissed away the tear stains from the corners of his eyes.

"Jun, Jun-er..." Jiang Yinghe whimpered with his eyes closed. Before he could utter a full sentence, he was kissed again on the corner of his lips.

"It's me."

...That was Li Huanhan's voice.

How dare you speak up now?! Out of all my insolent disciples, you're the one who uses way too much force!!

Jiang Yinghe didn't even have the energy to scold him. He raised a hand to cover his eyes. He sensed that big fluffy tail coming over to cushion his waist and felt slightly better.

That thing with backward barbs slowly and somewhat pitifully rubbed against him for a while.

There was some confusion in Jiang Yinghe's mind.

Why am I feeling sorry for Chang Ye???

People are all out to take advantage of kindness, wu...

Jiang Yinghe's lips were a little red and swollen. The place that he had applied a lot of spiritual medicines to heal seemed to have been injured again.

He couldn't take it anymore, so he ducked into a corner while calling out for "Jun-er'. As expected, Qin Jun took his hand and half-cradled him in a gesture of comfort.

"Tell him to slow, slow down a little..." Jiang Yinghe was kissed on the brow by the other person, who said hoarsely, "The more I say that, the more he...won't listen."

With Jiang Yinghe's current appearance and voice, every one of his actions were filled with temptation. The cold fragrance emitting from his body was simply bewitching, almost to the point of being an aphrodisiac.

This scent was clearly reminiscent of pine, cypress and red plums under a snowy sky, but it made people's hearts flush with intense desire.

Qin Jun gently kissed him and coaxed him patiently for a long time while also arguing with Li Huanhan using his divine sense, scolding him for having less restraint than even Chang Ye in this regard.

At that moment, a crane suddenly called outside the White Crane Jade Manor. A disciple's voice came from outside.

"Is Shixiong here? The Sect Master asked me to send over a pair of blank soul lamps and life plates. He said Shixiong needed them."

While Jiang Yinghe was away, the White Crane Jade Manor was tended to by Li Huanhan and Qin Jun. It made sense for this junior disciple to ask for them. The soul lamp and life plates, on the other hand, were meant for Jiang Yinghe and had arrived only now.

Jiang Yinghe's not-so-lucid mind instantly ground to a halt. He clutched at Qin Jun's sleeve, trying to catch his breath.

He looked at Qin Jun with teary eyes.

Jiang Yinghe had already retreated to the edge of the bed, but he was pulled over by the ankle and taken into his arms.

Not to mention now, he wasn't even to resist when Jun-er did this at the beginning...

"I'll go out later." Li Huanhan quietly said as he kissed the tip of his ear, "Shizun, relax."

That was all he said before he raised his head to look at Qin Jun. "Don't let Chang Ye shift into his beast form."

Qin Jun glanced at his shidi who was clearly rearing to try, then at his seemingly calm shixiong.

"Pah...I was wrong, you're still a bit more reastrained than Chang Ye."

"I appreciate the compliment. The same to you."

How could Qin Jun selectively forget who went first this time?

—-

The two disciples outside the door holding the soul lamp and the life plate didn't hear anything for a long time. They looked at each other.

"Looking at the spirit cranes, there does seem to be someone in the White Crane Jade Manor, ah." The disciple who spoke up just now said, "What's going on here?"

"Who knows." Another male disciple said, "I heard that Qin-shixiong's temper has gotten much better over the years. I hope it's him staying here, or else..."

Before he could finish his words, he saw the dark entrance gate slightly open. Li Huanhan appeared in front of the two of them with dark robes and blood red eyes. He collected the soul lamp and life plate in an instant.

Then the entranceway shut once again. All of it had happened too suddenly. After a long time, the disciple from before said dully, "Do you...smell something?"

"Smell what?"

"...The scent of plum blossoms."

Author's Corner

Qin Jun: He's pretending to be cute and obedient, and the other one's calm and measured appearance is a lie! Only Jun-er is dependable!! Believe in Jun-er, believe in love!!!

HeHe: ...Shut up, you liar! QAQ

OceanofPDF.com

CH67 - WHY DON'T YOU BUTCHER ME AFTER ALL (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The fragrance of incense was overwhelming.

The white mist rose and dispersed a light, but long lasting scent that entwined with the air in the room. The window was half-opened, letting in a faint breeze that gently lifted the gauze curtains around the bed.

Jiang Yinghe was woken up by the curtain tickling the back of his hand. For the second time in the past few days, he woke up in a daze in his bed.

In front of him was that little white cat again. Its big fluffy tail waving around in front of him, revealing a cute and harmless attitude. The tip of its tail rubbed against the back of Jiang Yinghe's hand, along with the curtains.

Wow, how cute. I want to sit on it until it suffocates.

Jiang Yinghe expressionlessly thought.

It was this fluffy tail that had captured his cat-loving heart, but he couldn't get it off when it strangled his waist. Not to mention this cat's tongue that was covered in soft barbs...

Every patch of skin he licked was irritated.

Feeling hopeless, Jiang Yinghe looked at the little white cat in front of him for a moment. Then he fell further into despair once he glanced at the

progress bar that had slowly advanced a bit overnight.

The unification level was now twelve percent.

It seemed that, out of his system and his waist, one would have to die today.

How unreasonable. Jiang Yinghe just recently rebuilt his foundation, but there was no way he could tame his cultivation partners and guide his disciples in bed even if he was in his prime.

And this was when they hadn't merged yet. Each one has stranger ideas in their head than the last.

Hiss... It hurts.

Jiang Yinghe took in a cold breath. He maliciously extended a hand to push the little white cat sleeping beside him off the bed.

The cat flipped in mid-air and landed on the ground. He looked over with those big, dark and seemingly harmless eyes.

Who would've known by looking at those eyes that the little beast called Chang Ye liked to bite the back of people's necks...

Jiang Yinghe looked at the harmless kitten expressionlessly until he guiltily jumped back on the bed and presented his tail to Jiang Yinghe.

As expected, the other two must've woken up earlier than him. Jiang Yinghe had only moved a little when the curtains were lifted by a hand that secured them with ribbons. He was presented with a familiar cup of throat-soothing tea.

Jiang Yinghe took the warm tea from Li Huanhan's hand, not wanting to pay him any more attention than necessary. He drank half the tea because there was no need to cut his face to spite others. Then he spoke, "Have you prepared well?"

Li Huanhan was silent for a long time before he said, "I..."

"Don't apologize." Jiang Yinghe was familiar with his little routine. This leader of the Tian Mo School was calculating, sly, and always used that look to coax him.

"I should have recognized your nature a long time ago. You've never behaved yourself when it came to this matter. You've learned everything you shouldn't have from Qin Jun, despite supposedly being his shixiong..."

His throat grew parched halfway through. Jiang Yinghe paused to take another slow sip of tea before calmly continuing. His demeanor was somewhat cool. "...That pisses me off."

Jiang Yinghe wondered inside why he didn't manage to teach anything related to cultivation and sword techniques. Instead, he was the one who learned all sorts of maneuvers in bed.

And Qin Jun, was that guy even human? That heartless bastard said a whole bunch of lies before going to town while holding Jiang Yinghe's waist. Did he even understand how deep he was going? This bastard ended up messing around with him for two hours.

...Thinking about it only fueled the flames of Jiang Yinghe's anger.

Jiang Yinghe took another sip of tea to suppress the fire in his heart. Then he remembered that foolish hope he once had... In the end, it seemed like the big ups in life were always followed by reciprocal downfalls...

He sighed. He knew that Li Huanhan was always good at admitting to his mistakes so there was no point in scolding him. He asked, "Where is he?"

Li Huanhan took the empty tea cup and started to make a new pot. "He went to get the medicine."

Medicine, huh...

Only then did Jiang Yinghe remember that Tong Guiyu had only sent over a few bottles of this kind of moisturizing medication. He had already used most of it last time.

Jiang Yinghe didn't say anything for a long time. When he remembered that he needed to ask after Zhangmen-shixiong, he heard the door at the entrance opening.

Only half the curtain had been parted, and there was a long screen divider outside with illustrations of a sun rising over five mountains and rivers. It was usually not out here. Someone had brought it out recently.

Qin Jun's figure was vaguely shown through the screen. He arrived at Jiang Yinghe's side in a flash.

Jiang Yinghe watched as another hand pushed aside the remaining curtains. He saw the newcomer place the medicine bottle aside and reach out to lift the blanket.

"Don't." Jiang Yinghe subconsciously stopped the other man. He watched as Qin Jun paused and looked at the other two.

He glanced at the fusion level that had only risen by one percent, then at the culprit in front of him. "Get out. I'll do it myself."

That was what Jiang Yinghe had said last time. He expected everyone to behave and not bother him in his home for a few days, but to his surprise, Qin Jun raised his eyebrows slightly and said in a very sincere tone, "Not this time."

Jiang Yinghe gaped. "...What are you trying to do?"

"It's too deep this time."

"..."

There was no change in Qin Jun's expression, as if he wasn't embarrassed at all by what he was describing.

"Shizun wouldn't be able to apply the medicine himself."

Jiang Yinghe blushed. "..."

How was he able to say it in such a heartfelt and refreshing way? That being said, if the creator of this world was completely normal, why would he divide his soul?

...No wonder he didn't have a cultivation partner.

Who could put up with this?

Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath and said, "Whose fault is this?"

"It's this disciple's fault." Qin Jun followed up smoothly, "I shouldn't have tested Shizun's boundaries. Naturally, Shizun has...unfathomable depths."

"...Have you no shame?" Jiang Yinghe felt his blood pressure rising, "All you know how to do is lie to me. I just knew that evil cultivators were all bad seeds... Hiss, my waist hurts."

Just as his words fell, Li Huanhan immediately encircled his shizun from behind, pulling him into his lap and massaging Jiang Yinghe's waist.

It was way too hard.

Jiang Yinghe raised a hand to stop his twitching eye. "If I fall for your tricks again, I might as well change my surname to yours... Help me apply medicine or get out."

Qin Jun's eyes have always been fixed on Shizun. He swallowed dryly and responded, "Okay."

As his hand lifted the quilt, the kitty on one side came over to offer his fluffy body. Although Jiang Yinghe was angry, he wasn't too distressed and just a bit overwhelmed and embarrassed.

That big tail wrapped around him teasingly for a while. He couldn't help but stroke it a few times. That was, until he felt the ice-cold ointment touch his most intimate area.

That area was red and swollen from reverse barbs repeatedly rubbing against it.

There was also a slight tinge of pain.

Jiang Yinghe was distracted for a moment. "Be more gentle."

Qin Jun paused in applying the medicine, like he remembered something due to those words. Then he dunked on his rival with a straight face, "If Chang Ye didn't shift into his animal form last night, there would be no need to apply medicine here."

The cat tail in Jiang Yinghe's hand suddenly stopped being so appealing. He silently let go of the fluff.

The little white cat stared at Qin Jun with wide eyes. To his disbelief, he discovered evidence suggesting the two of them had integrated slightly.

Chang Ye shifted back into human form and firmly linked Jiang Yinghe's hand with his. He said quietly, "Shizun, I was wrong. If Qin-shixiong hadn't egged me on, I wouldn't have been led astray..."

As the two experts exchanged blows, the fragrance of tea filled the room.

There would always be a taller mountain.

While Jiang Yinghe was looking at the culprit in front of him and getting a little angry again, a re-warmed cup of tea was handed to him from the side. His waist was being massaged even more softly now.

Li Huanhan's quiet and gentle voice sounded by his ear.

"We agreed beforehand that Qin Jun was to keep an eye on him and stop him from using his beast form. In the end, Qin Jun didn't watch him and he didn't listen."

He continued, perfectly composed, "Anyways, Chang Ye has never listened to anyone."

Chang Ye gasped in outrage, "You...!"

His words came to a stop. Chang Ye couldn't figure it out, even after half the tea was gone. Just how were his techniques lacking? Why did he sense the three of them reunifying only on weird topics like this?

Jiang Yinghe slowly drew his fingers back from Chang Ye's hand. He didn't want to pay too much attention to the cold, tingling medicine, but the sensation was too uncomfortable to ignore.

He subconsciously lifted his foot and stepped on Qin Jun's wrist. He hesitated before saying, "...You're hurting me."

"...At this point, it would hurt no matter how I touch it."

"Oh, so now you know that. Why couldn't you have such an epiphany last night?" Jiang Yinghe lightly sucked in a breath and quietly said, "If every time increases progress by one percent, there's still eighty-eight percent to go. If every time leaves me in this half-dead state, I'll be in my grave by the time we finish."

"One percent?" Li Huanhan asked by his ear.

"It's what that system, that intelligent spiritual artifact that can show your fusion progress, shows."

"...Qin Jun, it hurts..."

Qin Jun immediately stopped once he was called by his full name. He looked up at Li Huanhan. "Having fun pretending to be gentle?"

"Like you're really a reliable guy." Li Huanhan gazed at Jiang Yinghe's slightly furrowed brows and continued to rub his waist. "Yesterday, Sect Master Zhou sent new life plates and soul lamps over. They need to be rebranded."

After messing around doing extremely intimate things with these guys for two days, Jiang Yinghe finally got a chance to get down to business. He turned over in Li Huanhan's arms and whispered, "My back still hurts."

Li Huanhan used a little more force and kissed him on the forehead.

"Everything will get better once you recover your cultivation."

—-

Jiang Yinghe recuperated for another three to five days. After resolving himself to not be so easily fooled next time, he was finally back to being healed and relaxed.

Being rolled over repeatedly by a truck was really too exhausting. And painful. It wasn't something an ordinary person could stand. Not to mention three...

Thinking about doing it with any one of them made Jiang Yinghe feel faint.

Luckily, he wasn't tricked again.

He rebranded his soul lamp and life plate, sending them back to Peng Lai's main palace. On the way back to Qing Jing Peak, he ran into Tong Guiyu who was here to visit him.

In terms of their cultivation levels and ages, this Hun Yuan Xianjun was really coming on a bit strong. He immediately slapped a brand new novel on the table and asked, "Is it true?"

Right now, Jiang Yinghe was flipping through a book on recasting swords. Boundless spiritual energy and an aura of ice and snow surrounded his body. He appeared as cold and distant as he did before his reincarnation.

He raised his head and directed an indifferent look at Tong Guiyu. "Is what true?"

"Today, the author of this book told the bookstore that he got the inspiration from you." Tong Guiyu looked at him with suspicion, "It's being said outside that Li Huanhan, Peng Lai sect's Da-shixiong, is secretly harbouring his...female lover inside the White Crane Jade Manor while his shizun is in seclusion?"

Jiang Yinghe's fingertips froze on the cover of the book for quite some time. He recalled those two disciples that delivered the soul lamp and life plate

that day.

"As far as I know, you stayed on Qing Jing Peak during your seclusion. But that means..." Tong Guiyu surveyed him for a moment, "Li Huanhan's matter is but a baseless rumour?"

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes to look at him and said, "He's not hiding a woman, but...that rumour is not entirely baseless."

He looked away.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to ask Tong Guiyu about recasting his sword. While idly flipping through the book, he lightly said, "If the outside world wants to think the worst, then let them. But if you try to take someone else's cultivation partners, I'm going to butcher you."

Tong Guiyu stared at him before saying, "...I feel kind of disillusioned when you say such words while looking like an ethereal immortal."

Jiang Yinghe set the page he wanted to ask about on the table without changing his expression. "There's plenty more to be disillusioned about. Do you want to finish talking business or should I tell you first?"

As a calm, sensible and handsome man who knew that there was a time and place for everything, Tong Guiyu naturally replied, "Let's get the business out of the way first..."

Jiang Yinghe nodded and pointed to a line on the page. "I need many ice and snow attribute treasures to recast Wangchen. I have searched the cultivation world, but there are still not enough materials. Has anyone tried this method of using one sword to cast another described here?"

Tong Guiyu took the book and pondered for a long time. As the Deputy Sect Master of the He Huan Sect who collected swords and held Sword Conferences, he could naturally deduce the authenticity of the aforementioned method. He answered truthfully, "Nothing seems strange at a glance and it does seem possible. It's just that, as far as I know, no one has ever tried this."

Jiang Yinghe's own insight was also very accurate, but he just wanted to ask Tong Guiyu's opinion because his cultivation hasn't fully returned yet. He nodded at the other's words, "It seems I have to be the first."

Tong Guiyu said, "First? So you have already chosen a sword to work with? Recasting Wangchen is no small matter. Have you really..."

"What do you think of using Wuchen?"

Tong Guiyu's words stalled. He rose abruptly, as if he had been greatly shocked. Only after a long time did he say, "Isn't that Sword Saint Taichu's sword?!"

Jiang Yinghe nodded with an unchanged expression. "It is said to be sealed under the snowy plains."

"Sealed is putting it too lightly. The snowy plains exist solely because of Wuchen..."

Tong Guiyu sucked in a breath. As expected of a sword cultivator like his friend, he was planning on using the sword of a Half-step Golden Immortal to reforge his own. There were few people other than sword cultivators who would dare to dream of such a thing.

Jiang Yinghe seemed unbothered. "Maybe it's more like taking back what once belonged to me. There's no harm in testing my hypothesis. We can think of other ways to restore Wangchen if it doesn't work."

Tong Guiyu sighed, "Good luck with that then. So can we talk about personal matters now? Tell me something improper so I can catch my breath."

"Improper?"

Tong Guiyu gave him a look while propping his head on his hand. "That's right. If I'm deprived of juicy and scandalous gossip for a day, my foundation will surely become unstable. Next thing you know my

cultivation will scatter and I'll die. Since our Xuan Wei Xianjun is known for his maganamity, won't you help a fellow cultivator out?"

Jiang Yinghe was pretty sure he was joking. He thought about it before speaking, "...En. Actually, the other person was me."

Tong Guiyu remained silent for a long time. He gave Jiang Yinghe a meaningful look before speaking, "That...sounds even more ridiculous than the rumour about Li Huanhan having a secret female lover."

A great blow was dealt to Jiang Yinghe's self-esteem. What was he supposed to say when he really was the other person?! He could only repeat himself sourly.

Tong Guiyu was once again silent. He finally spoke up, "...Little He, why don't you just butcher me after all."

Author's Corner

Tong Guiyu: Little He, I really can't accept this...

HeHe: ...Can't you expand your narrow-minded way of thinking?!

Sahl

I love how Tong Guiyu has suddenly become a reproving maiden aunt. So cute!

OceanofPDF.com

CH68 - A JOURNAL OF OBSERVATIONS ON OTHERWORLDLY HUMANS AFTER TRANSMIGRATING (Draft)

Thank you Miimaas for the Ko-fis!

Editor: Sahloknir

In the Snowy Plains...

Jiang Yinghe had visited this place before his reincarnation.

He had come here last time because it was a sparsely populated location, suitable for undergoing his tribulation. Afterwards, he had met Chang Ye, who was sealed away in the ice.

This could be said to be the place he and Chang Ye first met.

Jiang Yinghe pulled his cloak tighter around himself. His cultivation was not yet at its peak. He had a lot of spiritual energy at his disposal, but the chill of the Snowy Plains could still pose a danger to him.

A warm hand covered his cold fingers. Its owner asked, "Is this the place?"

Jiang Yinghe nodded, entering the snowy cave he had once used and looking around. "This is it."

Li Huanhan made a sound of acknowledgement. His eyes never left his shizun.

"Chang Ye revived here, so I'm sure he knows something about the blessed land surrounding this area. Rumour has it that Sword Saint Taichu's Wuchen sword has the ability to change the climate. These snowy plains suddenly appeared less than ten thousand years ago, but its climate has remained stable throughout... That is the reason many people speculate Wuchen is sealed here."

Jiang Yinghe still felt a chill. He unconsciously pushed his fingers deeper into the other's warm hold and quietly said, "I'll have to put on another layer. My current cultivation is insufficient to resist this chill."

One of the advantages of bringing Li Huanhan with him was that the other had already taken all these things into consideration. Even if Jiang Yinghe had not prepared for this, his eldest disciple would have something in his spatial artifact or Qiankun pouch.

Li Huanhan smoothly took out a black cloak with blood red embroidery that faintly shone with an extraordinary lustre. It very obviously did not belong to Jiang Yinghe.

As he arranged the cloak on the other's shoulders, Li Huanhan lowered his head and said, "Bringing me alone should've been enough."

"Not necessarily." Jiang Yinghe said, "I feel like...there is more to this than meets the eye. If it really is as you've all said, that I am the reincarnation of the Sword Saint and the one who set all these events in motion... How could I have not anticipated Wangchen shattering during my tribulation?"

Li Huanhan was silent, his bloodshot eyes staring straight into Jiang Yinghe's.

"A Half-step Golden Immortal and a sword cultivator... His renowned sword contains a sword spirit, so maybe it will be able to give me some answers." Jiang Yinghe pondered, "After all, the Sword Saint warned me about—"

"...Warned you of what?"

Jiang Yinghe forgot that he hadn't told them about that part yet. He absentmindedly said, "The...small dark room."

Li Huanhan didn't even bat an eye, but his gaze deepened. He leaned over to press a kiss to Jiang Yinghe's lips, quietly saying, "How did he tell you?"

Jiang Yinghe found another thing he had omitted. He thought about it and decided to say it in a nicer way. "He said that all of you...wouldn't actually do anything to me by force, that you wouldn't dare to."

Li Huanhan paused for a moment. He nodded slightly without speaking.

"On the contrary, you guys have made a habit of bullying me lately. What respect for your teacher? All of my teachings were for naught."

With another layer on, Jiang Yinghe felt much more comfortable. He examined the Snowy Plains blessed land carefully, thinking about how to retrieve the sword that may or may not be sealed here. More importantly, how was he supposed to determine its location?

Just when he was feeling stuck, he noticed a wall filled with words in the depths of the ice cave. It was...all in simplified Chinese.

Jiang Yinghe sighed. "...I really went all out for myself."

The message was very straightforward. It directly listed out the process to access the underground caverns. There was some advice at the end: "It's best if one person goes in. Everything will go smoothly if you don't allow others to touch Wuchen."

Jiang Yinghe could see himself writing a similar message. He followed the inscripted steps and touched the layer of ice on the wall. After moving his finger down about three inches, there was indeed a tiny concealment formation there.

It seemed like this concealment formation had operated tirelessly over the last 10,000 years, drawing on natural spiritual energy and the cold to power

itself. The mechanism was very simple. Spiritual energy from someone with an ice and snow foundation was enough to grant control.

As the concealment formation fell, the sharp sword aura beneath the Snowy Plains blessed land suddenly became much more apparent. Jiang Yinghe looked down and saw that the thick layer of ice had become translucent. Injecting more of his spiritual energy opened a door forged from ice that led underground.

Everything was still within his expectations. Jiang Yinghe looked down at the steps and said to Li Huanhan, "I'll go down alone."

"No." Li Huanhan frowned slightly and looked at him with some urgency, "What if there is something lurking underground..."

"I'll bring Wangchen." Jiang Yinghe said, "It has your demonic heart on it, so you'll be able to sense if something's wrong and teleport to my side."

Seeing that the other party was still reluctant, he continued, "On another note...I clearly said that you alone were enough. Why did the other two follow me here anyways?"

Jiang Yinghe pointed and sent his divine sense outside the cave towards a nearby snow-covered mountain.

Li Huanhan extended his divine sense as well. As expected, he saw that Qin Jun and a big cat that had become one with the snow were at the peak of the mountain.

Li Huanhan only spared them a glance. When he turned to continue his conversation with Jiang Yinghe, he saw the door in the ground close.

Did he just...get whooshed?

At the same time, on that snow-covered mountain peak.

Qin Jun glanced at the big cat waving its tail beside him before looking back at the nearby ice cave. He seemed slightly puzzled. "Little Chang Ye-shidi, aren't you a little too laid back?"

The big cat yawned and got up from the snow, shaking its fur and transforming into a young adult. He leaned against the cliff with his hands behind his back, saying indifferently, "This is the place where I met Shizun. I know it like the back of my hand. Here, I'm the only one in the world who can interfere with Shizun under Li Huanhan's eyes."

Qin Jun gave him a warning look. His lightly spoken words hit the bull's eye, "Have you ever wondered why Shizun brought Li Huanhan, when it is you who know so much about this place?"

Chang Ye stopped talking. He'd been trying to ignore this point, but Qin Jun brought it up again.

He gritted his teeth and said with feigned casualness, "Who cares who Shizun brings? Martial. Siblings. Need. To. Get. Along."

Qin Jun wanted to laugh in his face. So he did. He sarcastically said, "Then why don't you reign in your devilish aura? The Snowy Plains devils we passed on the way almost fainted because of you. Is this the extent of your tolerance?"

"Weren't you the one who suggested following him here?" Chang Ye drew out the emerald flute at his waist and tapped it against his palm. His eyes revealed his dissatisfaction. "I find that all you've learned from fusing with me is sowing discord."

"And the same to you." Qin Jun was very modest, "It's still little Shidi who does it particularly well. If I had a choice, I wouldn't want this part of you either."

"Pei, you think I would?" Chang Ye turned away, tapping his flute with increasing anxiety. Then he sneakily swept his divine sense over to that cave. He abruptly found that he could not perceive Jiang Yinghe's figure anymore.

Just as he was about to open his mouth to ask Qin Jun, another voice coolly rang out from behind him.

"Don't waste your time looking."

Li Huanhan descended from mid-air and gave the two an expressionless stare, "He's gone underground."

Without waiting for a reply, he continued smoothly. "You two appearing here is really...surprising to me."

—-

There was only darkness in the depths of the ice cave.

Jiang Yinghe used hand signs to cast a lighting spell. He used the faint light between his fingers to continue forward.

The path was cold and slippery, so he slowed his pace. After crossing a series of spiralling steps, he saw a hanging sword mantle.

The style was exactly the same as the one he had seen in the old residence back then. Both had a rather peculiar aesthetic, one that his youngest disciple would enjoy.

Jiang Yinghe took a few steps forward to shine more light on the hanging platform. He saw the longsword sealed in ice and snow.

But there were no signs of life surging through it, nor was there any sign of the sword spirit.

But how could this be...?

Jiang Yinghe pondered for a moment before reaching out to touch the cold ice encasing Wuchen. As if sluggishly recognizing his touch, the ice quickly melted away from the inside out, revealing the longsword inside.

It was completely snow-white, radiating a chillingly cold aura. The words 'Wuchen' were engraved on the blade in a long and winding dark script.

Jiang Yinghe was able to retrieve it from the sword mantle unimpeded. However, the sword lacked any spiritual activity.

Not to mention a sword spirit, it didn't even resonate or hum. It was like this wasn't a treasure honed for many years, but just a replica made with many top-quality materials.

It shouldn't be like this...

When he recalled the reminder he saw before he descended belowground, Jiang Yinghe knew that the deductions of his past self must've gone awry somewhere.

Jiang Yinghe caressed Wuchen's blade. The sword that had lost its spirituality didn't resonate at all.

Just through touch, Jiang Yinghe was able to appreciate how many rare materials had been used to forge this sword. The Snowy Plains probably also formed because of those materials gathering here.

Jiang Yinghe put away the sword and prepared to go back and use it to cast his own. But he returned after a few steps to retrieve a book seemingly impervious to the elements from amongst the melting ice.

He hadn't noticed it before because his attention was focused on the renowned sword. At a glance, a line was written on the cover:

'A Journal of Observations on Otherworldly Humans After Transmigrating'.

Straightforward, brutal and practical. Just as he liked it.

Turning the first page, Jiang Yinghe saw his own name written there. The handwriting was neat and familiar, not surprising considering he had made it a habit as a child.

He turned to the second page without much fuss. At the top was the weather and date from ten thousand years ago. After confirming that this book was left by his past self, Jiang Yinghe saw the first sentence.

'He really is insane.'

Jiang Yinghe's gaze lurched as his heart skipped a beat. He continued to look down.

'He actually told me that everything he had was fake, that he is going to cripple his own cultivation and start over to gain...my sympathy?'

'What a ridiculous thing to say. I have every reason to suspect that he's on the verge of a qi deviation, but he appears normal on the surface. He said he was glad I had come when I did, or else the Dao's questioning during his test of mentality would have destroyed his cultivation.'

'Does he think that I wanted to come here? Does he think that I want to face this living hell on earth he's created? This man appears completely normal on the outside, but why does despair cloud every one of his thoughts...'

'I wouldn't have come to him if it wasn't to get back to Earth. Just how long does it take to guide someone who has gone astray back to the righteous path?'

'...The difficulty of this task is too high. I might as well think about how long this world will last amongst the endless cycles of carnage and slaughter.'

'When I return, I will definitely cherish my students.'

Author's Corner

HeHe: So I've been into male♂ on male♂ action all along.

OceanofPDF.com

CH69 - LED ASTRAY (Draft)

"What did Shizun just say?" Li Huanhan asked, looking straight at him.

Jiang Yinghe didn't know how to explain to him that he was talking to the system. As he was stared at by those profound and inscrutable blood-red eyes, another piece seemed to fall into place. The system's words echoed in his mind.

He didn't know which string had been plucked in his mind again and kept thinking about the words the system had said.

If only back then...

He raised his head slightly and kissed the other man's lips.

The hand that rested on his waist tightened violently, and the bloody barrier around him shook for a moment. Then Jiang Yinghe felt a sense of weightlessness as he was lifted.

Li Huanhan's lips were cold and soft. He was gentle enough at first, but as time passed things started to get out of hand.

The other pried open his teeth and seized the air between his lips. His hand snaked into Jiang Yinghe's hair.

They were in the snowy plains, surrounded by pervasive cold air. Only Jiang Yinghe's body possessed a light and crisp fragrance.

And the deeper Li Huanhan explored, the more Jiang Yinghe could appreciate the gentle softness of the other party. The more he could feel the extreme tolerance hidden beneath the surface.

Li Huanhan separated from him slightly, his eyes fixed on Jiang Yinghe's ruby red lips. He raised a finger to rub them slightly. "...Have you forgotten how to breath?"

Jiang Yinghe slowly regained his breath. The corners of his eyes were slightly red as he released his grip on his disciple's sleeve. "So what if I don't? Sooner or later..."

His words came to a screeching halt.

He wasn't looking at the deep pit left after the avalanche, but an unaffected mountain on the snowy plains. Qin Jun and Chang Ye were standing there with expressions that could not be darker.

...Li Huanhan carried me out in his arms?

Jiang Yinghe was too busy catching his breath to notice...

Just as Jiang Yinghe flushed in embarrassment, Qin Jun stepped closer, gritting his teeth and sneering, "Shixiong is always ready to save others. You're so eager to show off even now to your shidis."

He looked carefully over Jiang Yinghe's body to make sure that not a single strand of hair was missing, before relaxing a little. "Thank goodness you're okay."

Jiang Yinghe said, "I'm also glad that nothing happened to me. If I did get injured, all of you would probably be distracted when you return. Despite me being your senior..."

His dignity as their teacher had long since vanished. Jiang Yinghe sighed as he heard a sweet cat cry. Sure enough, when he glanced down at his feet, there was a little, green tea cat there that couldn't interject into the conversation or physically squeeze in.

It was only when he was in this form that Chang Ye was most liked by his shizun.

Jiang Yinghe knelt down to bring the little, white cat on the snow into his arms, rubbing his fluffy ears as he said, "..Despite me being your senior, you guys always behave like mother hens when it comes to trivial matters."

"You can't dissuade us from looking after you," Qin Jun said, "But we will definitely listen to what Shizun has to say."

When Jiang Yinghe heard these words, the dissatisfaction that had been pent up in his mind for days came out at once. He tried to resist, but he couldn't hold back the flood. Glancing around to make sure they were alone, he grumbled, "What a load of nonsense. When you guys decide not to listen, I have no way of persuading you otherwise."

Qin Jun was dealt a blow by those words. He blinked and watched as Jiang Yinghe straightened his cloak and turned to walk away. He stopped Li Huanhan from immediately following and pulled him aside. "When have I ever decided not to listen? I..."

Li Huanhan glanced at him calmly. He replied indifferently, "When he said you were too deep and to go slower."

"..."

"And when he said he'd put the medicine on himself without you."

Qin Jun was dumbfounded. Only after a long time did he say, "Then you're guilty as well. You hardly listen when it comes to that either."

Li Huanhan gave him a meaningful look, "But I wasn't the one who said I would definitely listen."

Qin Jun stalled. "..."

—-

The main hall of Peng Lai...

The lit incense wafted quietly.

Jiang Yinghe sat beside his shixiong, listening to Zhou Zhengping talk about the affairs of the sect.

He had a cat on his lap.

The little, white cat rolled around on his knees, lazily lifting its paws and pressing them onto the back of Jiang Yinghe's hand.

The squishy pads were soft and clean, and the little cat began to lick his hand as well. That tongue with soft barbs was a little rough and very distinctive to the touch.

"...Among the disciples of the younger generation, only the few gathered here are gifted with both talent and good dispositions."

Zhou Zhengping paused and glanced at that cat, confirming it was the demon king who was shameless when it came to Jiang-shidi. He coughed quietly, "Shidi, I heard you visited the snowy plains."

Although Jiang Yinghe was enamoured with the cat in his arms, he had been paying attention. He nodded. "I retrieved Wuchen, which was sealed there, causing the underground cavern to collapse. Over the next few millennia, the snowy plains will likely melt away."

Zhou Zhengping nodded slightly and said, "It takes a thousand years or even ten thousand years of accumulation to add or remove things from this world; the same is true of the snowy plains... You were able to successfully obtain this sword, which means you have some affinity with it."

Jiang Yinghe thought to himself, "Affinity was too light of a word. This sword has probably been with me no less than Wangchen."

"In a couple of days, your Yan-shijie will be exiting seclusion." Zhou Zhengping said, "With her around, I can also rest a little easier. In all these years, you have been indifferent to internal affairs while little Yun-shidi is too playful. Only Caiwei is suitable to be the next Sect Master."

Jiang Yinghe had always been single mindedly focused on cultivation. He knew nothing about managing and ruling a sect. But something about those words didn't sit right with him. "The next Sect Master? Why is Zhangmen-shixiong bringing this up?"

Zhou Zhengping put down the whisk in his hand and stared out the window at the vast sky. "I have spent my life sacrificing many opportunities to manage Peng Lai. Recently...Shixiong feels that he too is approaching the end of his days."

Jiang Yinghe's heart clenched. His mind tensed like a taut string.

"My heavenly tribulation is about to occur." Zhou Zhengping said, "Even after delaying it all these years, it will still be difficult to endure this calamity. But the time I have bought is enough for me."

"Zhangmen-shixiong..."

"There is no need to think about reincarnation." Zhou Zhengping spoke in an even tone, as if he was recounting a small and trivial matter, "You have not yet settled your affairs, and only those with regrets will reincarnate. At this point in my life, I am at peace. I wish for my spirit to return to heaven and earth. Of course, Shixiong will return to Peng Lai if I successfully pass my tribulation. But if I cannot then..."

He pointed to the geese flying by outside. "This will be our last meeting."

Jiang Yinghe choked up for a moment. Only after a long time of silence did he say quietly, "I know the hardships of our path. I know that we have to accept the inevitability of life and death."

"There is no need to be sad." Zhou Zhengping smiled, "If Shixiong has the good fortune to pass this tribulation, the righteous faction will have one more Xianjun amongst its ranks. Perhaps I could return after a hundred years through some twist of fate."

Jiang Yinghe nodded, slowly forcing his suspended heart down. "Zhou-shixiong is open-minded. I'm sure everything will go well."

"Exactly." Zhou Zhengping only touched on this matter briefly before switching the subject. "When your Yan-shijie exits seclusion, I will officially announce my long term leave of absence. At that time, apart from looking after little Yun-shidi, you should also watch over the newly accepted children."

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He recalled the small group of children with good talent and disposition they had discussed previously. After a moment's reflection, he said, "I'm afraid Chang Ye will be my last disciple, so..."

Before he finished his words, he felt the little, white cat in his arms stiffen, like he was already against these 'new disciples' that he had never met before.

"There is no need for Qing Jing Peak to take them in." Zhou Zhengping gave him a look, "With your looks and temperament, I am afraid that those youths, with their inexperience and vigour, might be...ahem. Led astray."

He paused for a beat, glancing at the white cat in Jiang Yinghe's arms. "...Besides, it's not safe for them to be near you."

Author's Corner

Sect Master Zhou (in a serious tone): Being alive is more important than having a beautiful shizun, right?

Rain

Kind of a melancholic chapter, but...just wanted to point out we're on chapter 69. Hehe.

Sahl

I too noticed it's chapter 69, ahem... teehee! A mix of sadness but also some amusement, courtesy of Zhou Zhenping and his concerns over his shidi's overpowering effect on young men. Ha!

OceanofPDF.com

CH70 - BEHAVE LIKE A HUMAN (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Outside the White Crane Jade Manor's gate, a spirit crane sleepily raised its eyes to see a few youngsters in green disciple uniforms standing outside.

Most of the new disciples in Peng Lai were from cultivation families. Their prior education made them more well-learned than their peers. Naturally, they heard about Xuan Wei Xianjun, who had disappeared without a trace nearly 400 years ago.

It seemed like he was in seclusion for 400 years and only emerged now. Sect Master Zhou's decision to have the new disciples greet their elder was unprecedented in history.

Although Xuan Wei Xianjun has been in seclusion for many years, his disciples remained well known in the cultivation world. When the elders of the Peng Lai Immortal Sect went into closed door cultivation one after the other, Ying Zhou sect came over once to stir up trouble. However, one of Xianjun's disciples, Li Huanhan, suppressed them with only his sword.

In recent years, the rumours surrounding Xianjun's disciples have become more and more outrageous. Many people say that with Li Huanhan and Qin Jun around, Peng Lai would be able to maintain its position even if Jiang Xianjun never came out of seclusion. In addition, Jiang Xianjun's last disciple has also finally made his presence known in recent years.

The young boys, dressed in cultivator robes with swords strapped to their backs, looked at each other. They were all somewhat nervous. One of the

more daring and mischievous of them stepped forward first to ask the crane spirit some questions.

"Crane Fairy," said the young man casually, "if you inform the people here of our arrival, I'll feed you this spirit fruit, okay?"

The crane spirit looked at him nonchalantly for a few moments, then called out twice. The heavy door opened. There was a long screen depicting five sunrises separating the inside from the outside.

A lingering, soft, faint fragrance wafted outside.

The juniors were hesitant to step forward, but their curiosity got the best of them. The leader of the group was about to open his mouth when he suddenly felt an overwhelming sense of imminent danger.

Cold sweat immediately covered his back as his hair stood on end. He subconsciously searched for the source of danger, only to discover that it seemed to come from...a cat.

At the edge of the long screen of five sunrises, there was a cat with black eyes and a snow-white body covered in long, soft, fluffy fur. Its tail waved slightly a few times like a large broom.

The moment that man and cat locked eyes, all the pressure seemed to disappear, as if it were an illusion.

The screen was then pushed aside by a hand, revealing pastel cultivator robes and the faint chill of cool detachment. Several people looked towards the edge of the screen. They were all dumbfounded by what they saw.

Jiang Yinghe did not expect these children to arrive so quickly, presumably on the orders of Zhangmen-shixiong. He did not have time to carefully dress himself, so he was only wearing a simple jade crown and regular clothes at the moment.

There were no decorations adorning his plain white robes, only a dark pattern of flowing clouds that appeared from time to time. There was a

small jade whisk that was rarely used casually resting on his arm.

The juniors seemed to wake from their trance. When they had collected themselves enough to greet their elder, another sudden burst of hostility sent tingles up their spine.

The dark door moved slightly as Qin Jun entered the inner room, slightly surprised to see the group in Peng Lai disciple uniforms here. He casually returned to Jiang Yinghe's side and placed several books on the table.

For some reason, the disciples felt like their lives were almost lost several times despite only being here a few moments.

Their leader swallowed dryly and barely managed to get through the formalities. He saw Xuan Wei Xianjun nod lightly and say, "This master has heard that all of you are skilled in sword formations."

This was what Zhou-shixiong had told him. Jiang Yinghe naturally wouldn't make things difficult for such young juniors, so he wanted to instruct and test them on their strengths.

Several of them nodded their heads like chickens pecking at rice, looking at him with a slightly complicated and indescribable gaze.

Although Jiang Yinghe felt the way they looked at him was a little strange, he didn't say anything. While glancing at the few books that Jun-er had brought over, he casually asked them to give a demonstration.

After reading the titles of the books, he raised his eyes to look at the group in front of him, ready to concentrate on carrying out his duty as a teacher. After all, his dignity as an educator was pretty much wrecked by those three unfilial sinners. It was rare to have this kind of opportunity.

Qin Jun sat next to him without saying a word, a smile playing on his lips. He didn't seem to mind at all. The little, white cat on the side also jumped onto Jiang Yinghe's knees and buried itself in his arms, as if he found it beneath him to intimidate these small fries.

Only when the demonstrations had concluded and Jiang Yinghe had given brief critiques did he hear a few of the juniors whisper as quietly as a mosquito.

"Jiang, Jiang Xianjun..."

Jiang Yinghe looked up at a blushing child who gathered his courage. "Are you still accepting disciples?"

The white cat acting spoiled in his arms stopped meowing.

Beside him, Qin Jun paused briefly from drinking his tea.

A million messages flashed through Jiang Yinghe's mind at once. For the safety of others and himself, he immediately said, "This master is no longer accepting disciples. All of you may leave."

He had a premonition that something might happen otherwise.

Fortunately, thanks to his timely intervention, the brightest stars in Peng Lai's younger generation were able to walk out Qing Jing Peak intact without bumping into any jars of vinegar. As for his personal safety, that too should be...

His thoughts came to an abrupt end here. He saw the entrance gate open again and the departing children bow meekly to their Da-shixiong. Li Huanhan ignored them and glanced emotionlessly at Jiang Yinghe.

...Why did he just look at me like he caught me cheating?

Jiang Yinghe silently watched Li Huanhan walk in and ask something in a normal tone. Then he asked about the progress of recasting Wangchen.

The calmer he acted, the more Jiang Yinghe felt like trouble was brewing. After he reiterated the process of recasting the sword, he suddenly felt the cat in his arms being yanked away mercilessly.

Chang Ye was backhandedly thrown to the ground by Li Huanhan. The cat turned incredulously to look at him, only to see this heavenly demon

forcefully kissing Shizun and sweeping him into his arms.

Hey! Where are your manners?!

The same words ran through Jiang Yinghe's mind.

Did this guy feel jealous over everything? Couldn't he even tolerate Jiang Yinghe meeting those juniors for the first time?

Jiang Yinghe was forced to hug the other man back, tugging at his collar and pulling it away a little. He panted while saying, "Why are you acting crazy again? ...Wu...!"

The unification level seemed to be stuck at 12%. The system was dead silent, like it had seen this scene many times before. It even wanted to come out and applaud.

Jiang Yinghe's lips were bitten red by Li Huanhan before he had the chance to say anything, "...Why are you like this even after being purified? You're so unreasonable..."

If Li Huanhan represented the Innate True Nature, then that meant his cultivation partner in the past, the Dao Ancestor before his soul was split, wasn't right in the head to begin with. Especially when it came to matters involving him.

His lips were licked again before he heard the other man try to calm himself down by taking deep breaths. His voice was very quiet. "They like you."

"Do you think everyone is like you?"

Jiang Yinghe could barely speak. He couldn't even find the words to scold him if he wanted to, so he could only reach out to the side for help, "...Jun-er."

Qin Jun indeed took his hand, cold fingers interlocking with Jiang Yinghe's and skillfully taking him from Li Huanhan's arms. He straightened the other man's loose hair, and said calmly, "Li Huanhan is exaggerating too much."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. He was just about to breathe a sigh of relief and praise Qin Jun when he heard the man say in a serious manner, "There were only two like that at most."

"..."

"The one who opened his mouth to ask," Qin Jun came over and kissed the corner of his lips, "must like you."

"..."

He really was surrounded by jars of vinegar.

Only at times like these that made his back ache in warning could Jiang Yinghe imagine how they were all one person. The system poured salt on the wound by popping up with another strange unification task.

"Unification Task 4: Engage in dual cultivation and exercise with multiple split souls. By searching for the great Dao together, the unification level will increase."

Jiang Yinghe stopped shoving Qin Jun's hands away for a second. The part about 'searching for the great Dao together' kept echoing in his mind, making him remember the yellow scenes they had been involved in, as well as the secret book of dual cultivation sent by Tong Guiyu.

...What kind of 'great Dao' is this??

His slight moment of hesitation was enough for Qin Jun to carry him behind the screen and onto the bed.

Jiang Yinghe learned his lesson last time. He said, "Wangchen needs to be recast..."

"There's no rush. Some time is needed to dispel Wuchen's sharpness."

The books that Qin Jun had brought over earlier were ancient tomes about casting weapons. It was not unusual for him to know the process.

Jiang Yinghe tried again after a moment of silence. "It is unwise for a cultivator my age to overly depend on the advantages of dual cultivation. Haste makes waste..."

"With Shizun's accomplishments, it is indeed only a matter of time before you regain your cultivation. But..."

His voice quietly carried a soft breath into Jiang Yinghe's ears, that made them tingle.

"It's been quite a while since last time."

So naturally, it could not be considered overindulgence.

Jiang Yinghe was dumbfounded. He didn't know what to say as the other party casually removed his cultivator robes. To be honest, he was somewhat afraid of the feeling of being driven to the brink. He subconsciously held Qin Jun's hand. "I..."

Before the words were out of his mouth, that pair of steel grey eyes stared steadily into his. Qin Jun whispered, "Has it ever occurred to you, Shizun, that our time with you is quickly running out?"

Jiang Yinghe's words trailed off. He stared at his disciple in a daze.

Qin Jun kissed him again as he continued, "After the fusion, there will never...never be another chance for me to hold you alone."

Jiang Yinghe's heartstrings were touched. He sensed a touch of sadness in the other as he spoke about fusion.

Qin Jun lowered his head closer. The cold edge of his lips pressed against his ear, his voice close at hand.

"Even we are unsure of what we will be like after fusing, or how long the process will take."

Jiang Yinghe's ears burned red, completely shaken by these words.

"Jealousy is an excuse." Qin Jun said, "I wanted to, well, have you look at me just a while longer."

...Who could remain unmoved by that?

Jiang Yinghe was unable to say a single word of rebuke. He let the other undress him and press a kiss to his lips.

—-

But it turns out that Qin Jun was truly a schemer.

What breed of dog was he?

Jiang Yinghe cried for half the night without being able to figure out where he had gone wrong. Also, how was this guy able to so quickly take out all the junk Tong Guiyu had sent over?

When Jiang Yinghe got up from the bed, he would definitely go and butcher that guy surnamed Tong.

Jiang Yinghe tried to bury his face in the bed to muffle himself. His palms were sweaty and slick, unable to grasp anything. Even his pale knuckles trembled as he subconsciously gripped the sheets.

Then, his bite mark ridden hand was covered by another. It gathered his fingers together and pressed them against the pillow.

He couldn't take it anymore!

His teeth bit hard on his lip, but Li Huanhan coaxed him into letting go, saying that he would break the skin there if he used any more force.

But why couldn't he take his own advice??

It was only when a large tail cushioned his waist that he remembered how his youngest disciple had been the most restrained so far. Jiang Yinghe reached out to hug Chang Ye. He heard Chang Ye coax him by whispering good-naturedly and gently in his ear.

Jiang Yinghe rested his head on his shoulder and panted to catch his breath. Before he could speak, he heard a familiar teenage voice approaching Qing Jing Peak under the cover of night.

"...Jiang Xianjun?"

It was possible to hear the sounds outside within the White Crane Jade Manor. The crane spirits were probably resting at this hour. Since the cultivation of the younger generations were unlikely to pose a threat, their presence didn't wake the spirit beasts guarding the door.

Jiang Yinghe's already drowsy mind instantly blanked out. He recovered some clarity.

"...This disciple knows that you announced that Chang Ye-shixiong would be your last disciple." The boy seemed to be leaning against the door with how close his voice seemed to be. He sounded very down.

"This disciple didn't return due to resentment. I was just hoping that Xianjun could impart a few more words of advice to this junior. I have a brother who's better than me in every way. All these years, I've always felt...I..." he paused, "But I've heard that Xianjun doesn't only look for talent when accenting disciples..."

Not only did Jiang Yinghe come to his senses, even the people beside him paused. In the room filled with intertwining fragrances there was a brief moment of silence.

Then, Chang Ye nuzzled closer to him. There was a smile on his magnificently handsome face as he whispered, "Those are all excuses."

"...En?"

"He's up to no good."

...That sentence sounded a bit familiar.

Chang Ye's inky eyes looked at him brightly and he kissed him gently, "Shizun, quickly reject him."

Chang Ye was clearly well-behaved now, but Jiang Yinghe suspected...that if he didn't immediately turn this disciple away, he would be tossed around in bed for days by this little beast.

With the benefit of hindsight, he realized that, although he felt exhausted every time he dual cultivated, Chang Ye hadn't even unleashed his true form or used devilish methods yet. It was...probably...possibly...not going to be fun.

At this moment, Qin Jun's fingers also clasped his hand, slowly sliding down towards his wrist. "Perhaps Shizun is not satisfied with you being his last disciple and wants to find...someone better."

What kind of implicit vinegar spirit words were those?

The words did not provoke Chang Ye. Instead, it was Li Huanhan who caused Jiang Yinghe's back to ache. He frowned stoically, clutching Chang Ye's shirt so he could lift a leg to kick Li Huanhan. Unfortunately, the other party held his ankle and negated the blow.

"Calculate your energy." Li Huanhan looked unconcerned, "Dual cultivation is meant to merge our spirits into one. Don't hold back..."

"...Fucking behave like a human and go slower..."

Author's Corner

The softer your heart is, the more likely you are to be dragged to bed ah, HeHe!

You should be glad that Mommy only knows how to ride a bike, otherwise you would have been beeped, then beeped, then beeeeped again, if you know what I mean? (whispering)

Sahl

Awww everyone give Qin Jun a hug! Also, author, I think we'd all be happier with more beeping.

OceanofPDF.com

CH71 - HIS BELOVED (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Although Jiang Yinghe had always known that Li Huanhan was a living jar of vinegar, it was the first time he had faced such a humiliating dilemma.

He couldn't sense even a hint of obedience in his eldest disciple. The closer he came to his limits, the tighter this person held on to him, like he was afraid of Jiang Yinghe running off. He held his shizun in a tight embrace.

On the other side, Chang Ye was still whispering words of comfort, urging him in a spoiled manner to quickly refuse the disciple. Jiang Yinghe had to admit defeat. He tried hard to steady his voice before he turned away the child outside the door.

The person outside paused for a moment, but there was no disappointment in his voice, as if he had expected this outcome. The disciple then boldly asked about Li Huanhan and Qin Jun, saying that those two were role models that he strived to emulate.

Role models...

Emulate...

Jiang Yinghe looked up at Qin Jun, who leaned over and kissed him. He felt Jun-er quietly chuckle.

"Me, a role model?" He seemed to think it was outrageous, yet novel. "A righteous faction junior that thinks of demonic faction figures as his role models... I'm not sure whether to remark on the quality of the younger generation or ourselves..."

He paused for a moment, "...Perhaps this is the light of the righteous path."

Jiang Yinghe was so overwhelmed by this 'light of the righteous path' that his mind could not recall any of its benefits. He vaguely hummed in a suppressed tone, his brows furrowed.

"But I guess he won't have a chance to achieve his goal anyway." Qin Jun's fingertips touched the crest of his brow and slowly stroked it. "He doesn't have...such a good shizun."

His words were half-joking, but Jiang Yinghe still flushed after being called 'Shizun' in such a sincere tone. He was reluctant to agree.

The young disciple outside the door did not hear a response from his senior. He seemed to think about something in silence for a while. Then, after saying a few more words, he left Qing Jing Peak.

After his footsteps faded away, Jiang Yinghe finally breathed a sigh of relief. The plush tail that had been supporting his waist came around and wrapped itself around him so sweetly that it was hard to refuse. It seemed to be a very ominous omen.

...It vaguely reminded him of...a large devil beast courting their mate.

—-

A cold candle burned on a dark night.

The rain outside washed away several days worth of dust and ash. The clouds hid the moonlight, leaving only sparse stars flickering in the sky.

A few strands of long, inky hair were draped across the soft quilt, spreading out sinuously. They were brushed away from the side by a hand which gently tucked them behind another person's ear.

Jiang Yinghe was so tired that he couldn't sleep anymore after resting a few hours. He looked up to see a pair of bright, red eyes tinted with darkness watching him.

The black snake on Li Huanhan's shoulder seemed to be waking up from its long hibernation. It lazily curled up under his clothes and yawned, flicking out its blood red tongue in Jiang Yinghe's direction in a sort of greeting.

Jiang Yinghe shuddered, ...Fear has jolted me awake.

Actually, he wasn't particularly afraid of snakes. On the contrary, he quite liked to observe the reptiles in a safe and controlled environment, preferably separated by a layer of glass. This was his first time seeing one so close.

Li Huanhan seemed to notice his gaze. He turned to look at the Blood Shadow draped over his shoulder and shoved the black snake's head back. He asked in his usual tone, "Do you not like it?"

Jiang Yinghe thought for a moment. "It's not that... My throat hurts."

Halfway through his sentence, he noticed how hoarse his voice was. After recalling how much of a headache Chang Ye had been in the latter hours of the night, even Li Huanhan's fierceness could be momentarily disregarded.

Besides, with how attentive Li Huanhan has always been afterwards, how could he stay mad?

As soon as he uttered those three words, a cup of warm tea was presented to him. Jiang Yinghe took the cup and habitually drank half of it to moisten his throat. Then he heard the quiet sounds of rain again.

He turned to look out the window at the slightly windy and drizzling night. He also saw the little white cat he had kicked several times last night lying next to the lampstand, its dark eyes glowing slightly.

"...Where's Jun-er?"

Li Huanhan's only reaction was a brief frown, like he had tasted something sour when Shizun brought up Qin Jun. But this emotion only persisted for a moment, passing so quickly that even Jiang Yinghe didn't really notice it.

"He's gone to instruct his juniors." Li Huanhan said in monotone, "To...refine the rising stars."

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. The statement made him slightly suspicious. He asked, "What did he take with him? Did he take his sword?"

"Yes." Li Huanhan answered, "Zhanyun is still here in the White Crane Jade Manor. The blade he took was Junzi Tie."

Junzi Tie was the sword that Jiang Yinghe had once given to Qin Jun. At that time, he had really thought that their relationship was purely that of a master and his disciple. His dedication to teaching was apparent in how he had prepared suitable weapons for each of them.

Turns out that he was teaching the wrong things all along.

At first, Jiang Yinghe was relieved. Then he realized that Qin Jun could still beat his juniors up no matter what sword he used. He gave Li Huanhan a look and suddenly said, "But how could this be..? Jun-er is always tricking me, but he can be considered the calmest one among you three. Why was he the one who..."

"I wanted to go originally," Li Huanhan said calmly, "but Qin Jun stopped me and told me to accompany Shizun."

...That makes more sense. It would be a massacre if you went.

Jiang Yinghe slowly sipped his tea and listened to the rain falling outside. As he gradually grew drowsy again, he caught the kitten that was previously obediently lying by the lampstand trying to sneak closer to him.

Jiang Yinghe didn't move a muscle. He watched the little bastard test his limits with his tiny paws.

His little paws were soft and fluffy, like mini mangosteens with claws hidden inside. Chang Ye came to Jiang Yinghe's hand, resting on it and trying to appease him while also acting spoiled.

Jiang Yinghe raised his eyebrows at him, ready to watch this little green tea cat's performance.

When the little cat saw that he had Shizun's attention, his tentative movements came to an abrupt halt. He mewled quietly a few times. Upon seeing no reaction from Jiang Yinghe, the kitten waved its tail and turned on the waterworks.

Jiang Yinghe was stunned. Then he slapped the cat's head and spoke coldly, "Get off and stay away from me. Otherwise I'll have you neutered tomorrow."

How could this little green tea cat have the face to cry in front of him? Was he not the one acting so spoiled yesterday? And he was particularly talkative too, constantly asking things like, "Does it hurt?", "Am I in too deep?", "Does Shizun feel good?" ...etc.

There was no filter on that little mouth of his.

...I'm going to stop thinking about it before I get angry again.

He pushed the cat that came over to him onto the cold floor. Then the tea in his hand was replaced with another.

Jiang Yinghe sipped his tea and checked the unification progress bar. Finally, this thing that was going to be the death of his rose by more than one percent at a time. With a push from Unification Task Four, it had broken through the twenties in one fell swoop, reaching twenty-two percent.

This was probably the best news Jiang Yinghe had seen in days.

On top of that, increasing the unification level meant that more pages were unlocked in that journal...

As he was thinking about it, he was suddenly cupped and kissed on the face.

The kiss was very light and devoid of any lustful feelings, like it was just meant to bring him back to his senses.

Jiang Yinghe did come back to his senses. He felt the other's gentleness and care from the light brush of their lips. Then, Li Huanhan's voice rang out beside his ear.

"You seem to be happy. Care to share?"

Although he was now aware Jiang Yinghe had a 'system', he was not quite able to understand this tool's existence.

"The unification level," Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes to look at him with bright and glittering eyes, "it's gone up a lot."

Li Huanhan was silent for a few breaths. He smiled and said, "What good news."

Good news.....

Jiang Yinghe's mind suddenly cooled, as if it was covered with autumn frost. He looked intently and seriously into the other party's blood-red eyes, barely able to discern how Li Huanhan truly felt from his words alone.

How could this be good news for him? Even Jun-er said before that...

It was hard for anyone to predict what it would be like after the fusion. Li Huanhan had once posed a question to him in the carriage. If he was just a fragment of a god's soul, then his past, his experiences, what was their worth?

Li Huanhan's expression rarely changed. He was often calm and steadfast, and occasionally crazy and unpredictable. Even Jiang Yinghe thought that he rarely smiled.

Jiang Yinghe hesitated. "...Are you, aren't you afraid?"

"Afraid of what?"

"Fusion." Jiang Yinghe said, "...There is a chance that...you will—"

"That won't happen."

The other party answered so crisply that Jiang Yinghe was stunned into silence. Li Huanhan rested a hand on his shizun's forehead and said in a calm tone, "For the body to remain, we must overcome the trials we experience from birth to death. For the soul to remain, we must overcome the dangers and hardships on the path to immortality."

"I did have scruples at one time, fearing that my experiences with Shizun would be lost after fusing into one. Just like when Qin Jun became your disciple, I was truly terrified that he would steal your attention away, depriving me of the only care I have ever received."

He paused for a moment, his breath slowly dispersing and mingling subtly with the cold fragrance of Jiang Yinghe's body.

"My existence will always remain in this world. Not in Peng Lai sect, much less Tian Mo school, but in Shizun's heart."

His tone was so calm that if Jiang Yinghe hadn't been paying attention, he would have thought that the other man was just saying something inconsequential like "good morning" or "good night".

Jiang Yinghe was kissed on the eyelashes by him.

"I met Shizun on a day in April," He whispered, "a spring day in the mortal realm."

Jiang Yinghe clearly felt his heart stirring. He was surrounded by the other's scent, as if wrapped in a soft and slightly cool breeze.

He did not say anything for a long time. When the other brought his arms around him, Jiang Yinghe returned the embrace. He was completely at peace as he burrowed into Li Huanhan's chest and quietly said,

"...I'm going to sleep a little longer."

"En." Li Huanhan kissed his forehead. With a slight gesture of his hand, the distant candle in the lampstand suddenly went out.

All that remained was the pattering night rain and the cold moon obscured by dark clouds. The spirit cranes at the door were already fast asleep under the sparse stars.

The entrance gate opening became very soft amidst the sound of the rain. A tendril of mist coalesced into human form, taking off his raindrop-stained outer cloak.

His footsteps dispersed the silence in the space behind the screen. Qin Jun glanced at Li Huanhan and saw him tucking Shizun in. They didn't need to communicate for him to know that Jiang Yinghe was resting.

The two had gradually increased their level of integration and tacit understanding. Without saying a word, Qin Jun casually lifted the cat off the floor by the scruff of his neck with one hand and dropped him on his lap after retreating a fair distance from the bed.

The night was silent. The bright moon hid her face as the stars faded from sight. Finally, even the sparse drizzle stopped.

His beloved was asleep.

Author's Corner

That was the warmest spring I had ever encountered.

OceanofPDF.com

CH72 - SERIOUS MATTERS FIRST, ALRIGHT? (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The sound of rain intermittently lingered throughout the night.

The next morning, a long-tailed bird landed on a pine tree on Qing Jing Peak. This bird seemed to have awakened its spirituality, seeing as it was able to fly so high up the cliff.

Jiang Yinghe opened the window and saw the bird on the pine fly over, land tentatively by the window and look at him with intelligent eyes.

The morning light and fresh air drifted in.

Jiang Yinghe only looked at it for a few moments, before continuing to peruse some descriptions and points on recasting swords. He was estimating when he could start preparing for the important stage, but he met with a problem.

When he went to retrieve another book from the shelf, his eyes landed on that journal.

As the unification level increased, its contents would also become clearer.

Jiang Yinghe retrieved the journal. As expected, the originally blank fourth page was now covered with neat and familiar handwriting.

'...It hurts too much.'

'Only now do I fully comprehend what an earthly purgatory he has created. Cannibalism within species, war between species, and corruption abound... There is no discipline, no morality, and no shame here—only endless strife.'

'His Dao heart was muddled when he created this world. He thought it would be normal, but he did not realise that his creation would be influenced by his state of mind. Due to his emotions, endless amounts of desire and pain were added into the mix.'

'The world slides inexorably into the abyss—towards a dead end... But I still cannot bring myself to agree and let him destroy his cultivation and put an end to this living hell.'

'After all, despite this world appearing as purgatory to us, no one can truly know how many people are still struggling to survive in it now. Even if you are this world's creator, I still think it is better to give these lifeforms the freedom to live and die as they choose, instead of...'

Instead of just condemning them to destruction.

Jiang Yinghe added silently in his mind, linking this account to that dark era and the few sentences used to describe it in the historical records.

He eased his mind for a moment and turned another page.

'His Dao heart wavered when the human world was first formed, when I arrived... Perhaps it has something to do with me. Has my decision to cultivate the supreme path...moved him instead?'

The middle portion was blotted out by a large inkstain, the contents completely obscured from sight. Jiang Yinghe could not even guess half a word after a long time.

This was especially unfortunate, considering the line underneath the inkblot read:

'His divine soul is going to disperse.'

Another small blank space afterwards.

'...My kitty passed away.'

Jiang Yinghe's heart suddenly clenched. He could sense the emotions behind these lines. The memories locked away in his mind began to shake.

Although he still couldn't recall them, he could perceive the pain he felt ten thousand years ago in these two short lines.

He closed the book and took a breath, thinking that he wasn't suited to read such an emotionally abusive text. With his basic level of skill obtained after confiscating novels as a good teacher should, he guessed that the next few entries would be especially twisted and angsty. Something like how his divine soul dispersed, so the two lovers were doomed to never cross paths again, no matter how long the living one waited...

After Jiang Yinghe finished guessing according to his rudimentary skill level, he steeled his resolve and turned to the last page he could read so far.

'His Dao heart has deviated to the point that his divine soul is splitting. I suspect he's thinking of unsanitary thoughts in that head of his again.'

En?

'I've brainstormed with him through the night and we've come up with several ideas. In the end, splitting his soul seems to be the best option. His divine soul needs to be divided into three parts, so how should we make the split so as to prevent qi deviations due to unequal division of the Dao heart?'

'This topic was so important that it made my back sore after discussing it for an entire night. But when we were at last finalizing the plan, it was like someone turned on a faucet in that head of his. He said that he was afraid he wouldn't be able to find me again after being split...'

'Heh, how naive. If everything goes according to my plan, not only will you find me, you'll also have to kneel before me and call me Shizun. I really am a genius.'

.....

Jiang Yinghe expressionlessly closed the journal and threw it back on the bookshelf. He dully returned to his seat, with only a single thought in mind.

...Peerless little genius, did you ever think about how to deal with three of him after the split?

The more Jiang Yinghe thought about it, the more his head hurt. Reaching up to rub his brow, he tried to relax and think about why he'd done this.

If his presence really did affect the Dao Ancestor, then he would have to be part of the process of reunifying his soul. Otherwise, everything would play out the same as before, and the human world would still be greatly influenced by his mental state.

When looking at it that way, this journal, Wuchen, and even the mirror that exposed Qin Jun's identity in the Sword Saint's old residence were all arrangements that Jiang Yinghe had devised beforehand to advance his ultimate goal.

Jiang Yinghe slowly pondered on this. He brushed up on the historical records to the present day again. After being cut off from the disruptive influence of its creator, the development of the world had gradually stabilized.

When he finished reading, he exhaled slowly and lightly rapped the table, not knowing whether to compliment himself on his peerless genius or to be ashamed about his lack of knowledge of a certain aspect between cultivation partners.

He truly paid an enormous price for his past self's scheme. Every time it happened, his back ached for days.

The bird by the window cocked its head at him. It seemed to find the light scent of Jiang Yinghe's body very pleasant, so it jumped onto the table and gave him a light peck on the back of his hand.

The gentle contact seemed to indicate the newly sapient little bird wanted to play for a while with the cultivator radiating a soothing presence.

The next instant, a black snake rose from the corner of the table, its scarlet eyes staring at the bird. Its tongue flicked out. Just as the bird was about to fly away, a hand casually picked the black snake up and tucked it back into his sleeve.

Li Huanhan put the Blood Shadow back. He glanced at what his shizun was reading as he replaced the cup of tea on the table. "Why are you alone?"

If it was an ordinary day, even if Qin Jun left to tend to his affairs, a certain little green tea cat that had to nestle in his shizun's arms every day to sleep would certainly not leave his side. Strangely enough, both of them were conspicuously absent today.

Jiang Yinghe accepted the clear tea as he always did. He savoured the taste of Blessed Jade Dew for the first time in a while. "I asked Jun-er to take him to be neutered."

...Neutering?

Li Huanhan paused while reaching for the paperweight. His fingers rested on the square of lapis lazuli. After a moment of silence, he asked again, "...Although he's..."

For the first time, he had the thought of saying a few words for Chang Ye. After all, he didn't know if this would affect him down there after they fused. After struggling for a moment, he continued, "But surely this is too..."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a very long look before he couldn't help but laugh. "Don't worry, I was joking."

He paused for a moment and added, "There's been many rainy days recently. I checked the devil race's canonical records. In this kind of weather, fierce beasts tend to build nests and go into heat, so I told Jun-er to

take him to clear his mind. I don't want to become famous in Peng Lai because Chang Ye can't control himself and makes too much of a fuss."

Li Huanhan nodded slightly and fetched the lapis lazuli paperweight. He set it down on a corner of the page before grinding some ink.

Jiang Yinghe looked up and saw that the other party's blood red eyes were vivid and completely calm. There was not even a hint of the danger and horror the Xuehe Demon Lord was infamous for.

The splitting of the soul saved the extremely deviated Dao heart, but it also created flaws in each of their natures. Only with patience and guidance could those flaws be remedied.

"The blackened status bar has been cleared, so I should be almost done, right..?" Jiang Yinghe thought as he watched Li Huanhan. His gaze became more and more pronounced until Li Huanhan stopped moving and looked over.

The pair of unfathomably deep eyes the colour of blood were still. The two looked at each other for a long time before one of them suddenly moved closer, causing their breaths to instantly mingle into one.

Jiang Yinghe could feel his disciple's blade-like aura, filled with killing intent, wax and wane. When he was calm, not a bit of this sharp danger could be detected, like he was a dragon hidden in a cold pool.

Then, Li Huanhan shifted slightly and kissed him.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback as his pen-holding hand was seized. When he touched the slight coldness between the other party's lips, he hesitated for a breath and asked softly, "Why did you suddenly..."

"Didn't Shizun hint at this first?"

"...What?"

Li Huanhan's voice was calm, his eyes focused on Jiang Yinghe. "Shizun looked at me for so long first."

"Er, that's because..."

"Doesn't looking at me mean that you like me and want me to kiss you? Or did you want us to..."

...What kind of logic was that??

Jiang Yinghe was afraid that he would say something even more outrageous. He knocked on the desk. "Speak no more."

Li Huanhan did as he wished. He used the strategy 'actions speak louder than words' to teach Jiang Yinghe what it meant to learn from teaching.

He kissed Jiang Yinghe again, without any of his previous tentativeness. It was a soft and lingering kiss that deepened by the second.

Jiang Yinghe had never been able to cope with such gentle attacks. He had a vague feeling that he might have been so fooled by this lunatic's gentle exterior back then that it still worked on him now.

He raised his hand and grabbed Li Huanhan's lapels. Just as he slowly relaxed and began to get into the mood—

The entrance gate opened abruptly, and the crane outside the door called out along with a familiar female voice.

"Jiang-shidi! Zhangmen-shixiong told me that you had safely returned to Peng Lai. Our decision to suppress the news of your death for four hundred years was not in vain after all. I have managed to break...through..."

Yan Caiwei stood in place, her words coming to an abrupt halt.

It was like her feet had taken root. She couldn't move her eyes away from the scene in front of her. She watched the jade brush made with wolf bristles fall from her shidi's pretty fingers and shatter in two on the floor.

Yan Caiwei blinked. She coughed dryly twice and said, "I-it seems I've interrupted something. Why don't you two get the...serious business out of the way first?"

—-

On the other side, in Wanyao City.

The innkeeper sat at the counter lazily calculating his accounts. He ordered the bellhop to deliver the last one they had caught. He sighed, "So true love does exist in the world. This daren has expended every effort for the future happiness of his cub."

The bellhop agreed as he carried the cage up and into a room.

Qin Jun nodded as the little devil put the cage down. He swept a glance across the room and asked, "Still not up to your standards?"

Chang Ye was dressed in red with all the fluffy hair on his tail standing on end. His suppressed aura gave off the feeling that he was going to go berserk soon. His palm slammed down on the table. "Did Shizun mean for you to get me a room full of female cats?! Qin Jun, are you asking for a fight—"

"Does it matter?" Qin Jun languidly glanced at the floor filled with caged cats. "Even the current you can't beat me."

He paused, "Moreover, Shizun asked me to bring you out here to clear your mind so the weather wouldn't trigger your instincts. After all, devil beasts are...always in heat for a few days a month."

Chang Ye was about to be angered to death by him. He breathed in deeply several times to try and calm down. "Don't think for a second that I wouldn't fight with you just because we're the same person..."

Qin Jun continued to lounge around. His lips casually quirked up. "Whatever. We're in Wanyao City anyways."

Chang Ye grit his teeth. "...The only thing similar between you and Li Huanhan are how despicable your methods and attitudes are."

"Thanks for the compliment." Qin Jun laughed a little, "If I wasn't afraid of experiencing side effects after fusing, I would've taken this opportunity to

castrate you. Better than competing with a cat for favour everyday."

Pei. Why do I feel like I've said these words before?

Author's Corner

Yan-shijie (rubbing her hands together like flies do): A VIP front row seat is a bad idea, right? Hehehe...

Sahl: Ah! My baby Huanhan has Shizun all to himself! However as we've gone on I love Qin Jun more and more...and maybe Chang Ye – when he's being a good kitty and not a little monster...wait...I—

OceanofPDF.com

CH73 - EVEN A DOG IS SMARTER THAN YOU (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Yan Caiwei was dressed in purple robes, with a plain palace ribbon tied around her waist. She sat down opposite Jiang Yinghe, feeling an equal mix of anticipation and embarrassment.

Li Huanhan had just left, perhaps because he believed Jiang Yinghe would be unable to speak freely with him there. The two of them were alone now.

Jiang Yinghe personally poured a cup of tea for her. "Congratulations to Shijie on your successful breakthrough. Your exit from seclusion was very timely."

Yan Caiwei nodded. "Zhangmen-shixiong has already told me about his current situation. Little Yun-shidi is still in seclusion. Now that you are back, I can rest assured that there is someone to share the burden on my shoulders."

Jiang Yinghe understood that she was referring to her responsibilities as the Deputy Sect Master, so he said, "It has been hard on Shijie. There is no need to worry. I will do my best to help with any problems."

Yan Caiwei was touched. "Shidi has always been a man of great skill and character. With your worthy temperament as a world-renowned teacher, it is no wonder you were able to change your disciples for the better, and face your love tribulation without fear. Shijie is naturally very..."

Jiang Yinghe looked at her quietly, until Yan Caiwei could say no more. He made the first move on the chess set. "It seems that Shijie is in very good spirits. You still have the heart to make fun of me."

Yan Caiwei smiled faintly and sighed, "What else should I do? Mope around? Zhangmen-shixiong handed over the Sect to me in a time of peace, which is much better than the chaos and strife in the past. Besides, I wasn't making fun of you."

She paused and placed a piece, sealing off all of Jiang Yinghe's pieces on the right. "With Shidi by my side, Peng Lai will have no troubles communicating with the other forces."

Jiang Yinghe considered the piece she had put down. He didn't refute her point. "Chang Ye went to the human realm to search for me, while Huanhan and Jun-er kept Peng Lai secure."

Speaking of this, Yan Caiwei could not help but glance at his forehead again, examining the mark formed by the half demon core there. She sighed, "Once, Shidi reminded me of the crisp wind under the clear moon. I thought of you as a person removed from mortal affairs, gifted with extraordinary talent...perhaps even the reincarnation of Sword Saint Taichu. You were like the first snow landing on Qing Jing Peak's pine branches."

"But now when I see you again, I feel that you have completely opened up. No longer is there a trace of coldness in your words. It's like..."

She thought for a moment and said, "It's like the snow has melted. As it says in the 'Tao Te Ching', "The greatest virtue is like water, allowing benefits to flow to many without asking anything in return".

Jiang Yinghe did not feel worthy of such praise. "How can I not ask for anything in return? Shidi's objective has not been fulfilled yet."

Yan Caiwei looked around his White Crane Jade Manor and came to her own conclusions about what her shidi wanted. She thoughtfully said, "Actually, there is no need to rush. If you really can't choose from those

three, just give yourself more time to think it over. As long as you don't let them down too harshly and change love to hate..."

"They're all the same person."

Yan Caiwei stopped talking. All her thoughts were violently blown away. She couldn't see how that was true. It was a moment before she recovered, "But how...?"

Before she could even finish, the voices of Peng Lai disciples could be heard outside the manor.

"Sect Master, Xianjun, He Huan sect's Tong Xianjun has sent a letter. He insists on inviting Xianjun to...Lan Ruo Temple."

Tong Guiyu of He Huan Sect sent him a letter asking him to go to...Lan Ruo Temple?

In theory, Tong Guiyu cultivated the harmony path, so he should not visit a Buddhist retreat like Lan Ruo Temple. Even when Hui Jing Chanshi passed away, he did not attend the memorial held there.

Now, a Hollowed Cave stage Xianjun, who was at the peak of the harmony path, was asking him to meet up at Lan Ruo Temple.

Jiang Yinghe hummed affirmatively and asked the disciple to deliver the letter around the screen divider. He only opened it in front of Yan Caiwei after the disciple excused himself. He frowned as he looked it over for a while.

Yan Caiwei also sensed that something wasn't right. She asked, "What did he write?"

"...He says," Jiang Yinghe committed the first half and vaguely summarized the rest, "that he had encountered a great calamity and hoped that I could go over to offer guidance and aid."

Yan Caiwei knew right away that the details were inconvenient to mention, so she let it drop. After asking after her Jiang-shidi's disciples, she sighed

and reminded him to pack medicine, not strain himself and, most importantly, not be overly soft-hearted. Otherwise, those three evil cultivators might not even leave her shidi's bones untouched.

Jiang Yinghe was fine with the first part, but he felt like the last part was going off topic. Before Yan Caiwei could further express her discontent with cruder words, he redirected the conversation to another topic.

—-

Jiang Yinghe didn't expect Tong Guiyu to mess up something like this.

He'd known Tong Guiyu since they were young. The two of them, along with Tong Guiyu's shidi, Xiao Xuanyu, all ranked on the List of Notable Cultivators. They cultivated and experienced hardships together, so they understood each other well.

Although Tong Guiyu was an amorous man who cultivated the harmony path, he was not without morals. He would not deceive others and derived no pleasure from leading children from good families into sin. That was the reason he and Jiang Yinghe could get along.

In that letter, Tong Guiyu left subtle hints suggesting that he had almost had a qi deviation due to his Dao heart becoming muddled. He was only saved at the last moment thanks to a considerate cultivator from Yao Wang Valley.

There was no need to mention what kind of method was necessary to save a harmony path cultivator from a qi deviation.

The story suggested that Tong Guiyu had met with a truly difficult problem, so of course Jiang Yinghe would go and help his friend.

So when Qin Jun returned, he learned that Shizun was going to that temple again.

Chang Ye had returned with him to Peng Lai. Neither his beast ears or tails were out, and he didn't even change into his cat form. He didn't seem to be in the best of moods. Now, after just catching a glimpse of Jiang Yinghe, he

found out that the other was going to that something-something Buddhist place again.

His eyes reddened with aggravation as he tugged Jiang Yinghe's sleeve and pitifully begged, "Ye-er has taken suppressants, so I definitely won't do anything to Shizun. Please don't go to that temple, all the people there are monks who don't understand love. I'm scared they'll recite mantras all day. Does Shizun not want Ye-er anymore...?"

His youngest disciple was a peerless beauty. Even if only half his face was visible, his appearance was still without match. Chang Ye's always nestled in Jiang Yinghe's arms as a cat lately. He seldom pleaded quietly like he did now.

Jiang Yinghe was momentarily distracted by his beauty. He took a a few more glances before he said, "My reason for going has nothing to do with you."

Chang Ye immediately glanced at Qin Jun before shifting closer until he was almost touching Shizun's lips. He whispered, "Is it because the two of them are too fierce? Shizun, don't go to Lan Ruo Temple. Why don't we go to Wanyao City instead? Please pet me..."

As he spoke, a tail with bright, smooth fur came and hooked around Jiang Yinghe's wrist, nuzzling him and pressing itself into his hand.

...This should be illegal.

"...It's not because of them either. I'm going because..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he was pecked on the lips by Chang Ye, who was extremely close to him. "Shizun...pet my tail."

The pointed ears that emerged from his head at some point nuzzled Jiang Yinghe sweetly, making it hard for him to refuse. In a daze, he almost wondered if Chang Ye was taking advantage of having fluffy fur to seduce him.

Right after, Jiang Yinghe couldn't help but pet him a few times, Li Huanhan appeared behind the red-robed youth and yanked him away by his collar.

After removing his shidi, Li Huanhan looked down and collected the green jade chessboard Jiang Yinghe had used, saying in a flat tone, "Listen to what Shizun has to say."

Chang Ye had only gotten slightly closer for a moment before he was pulled away again by this rival of his. His ears immediately retracted, leaving only inky hair on his head.

The tail in Jiang Yinghe's hand also withdrew.

Jiang Yinghe's eyes subconsciously glanced at his youngest disciple's tail as he explained, "I'm going because Tong Guiyu met with some trouble. I have to go after knowing him for so long."

Li Huanhan nodded and didn't get jealous for no reason again. He calmly stated, "Then I will go with Shizun."

"Me too." Qin Jun glanced at Li Huanhan, "I can't feel at ease when only Li-shixiong is there to take care of Shizun."

Li Huanhan raised an eyebrow slightly and looked back at him.

"So what if there's only me? What are you uneasy about."

At this point, the two of them were highly integrated already and had a basic level of tolerance for each other. The innate true nature and the acquired mentality had relatively similar feelings to begin with. Only Chang Ye, as the Tendency of the Heart, showed a greater degree of divergence.

Qin Jun casually said, "Your brain sometimes stops working. Although I can barely give you my approval, that doesn't change the fact that I'm the most reliable."

"...You were the first one to blow your cover and strain your relationship with Shizun, and you call yourself reliable?"

Just as the barely conciliatory relationship between the two was about to deteriorate, Jiang Yinghe immediately cut them both off and told them that they could both come along. Then he reviewed the notification that popped up from the system.

"Unification Task 5: Explore the pasts of the split souls. The reward will be a certain percentage of unification progress."

Their...pasts?

According to his prior experience with this half-dead system, it would only release tasks at the very last second. So the location at which this task was to be completed was...Lan Ruo Temple?

—-

Lan Ruo Temple.

A few banana trees framed the entrance. Their leaves had traces of dew from the light rain these days.

A monk swept the ground outside his window. His name seemed to be Kong Jing, a personal disciple of Abbot Chan Qing and currently the most talented individual in the Temple. He was already at the Primordial God stage.

The greenish tiles were wet. The rustle of a broom sweeping across them could be heard.

There was incense lit inside the quiet meditation room. Its fragrance drifted throughout. The man meditating on the futon suddenly opened his eyes and turned to spit out a mouthful of bright red blood, soiling his sleeve.

Chan Qing opened his eyes and sighed, "Immortal friend Tong's Dao heart is in turmoil."

Tong Guiyu wiped his blood-speckled lips with the edge of his light pink sleeve. He looked down quietly and said, "Is there really no way back?"

"Although this one has little understanding of the harmony path, I do know the signs of an unstable mind. After all, the reason this monk has secluded myself in the temple for so long is to barely hold on."

Chan Qing looked at him again and dismissed the mirror of past and future between them. "The past and the future are both blank. You already know this, Xianjun, so why ask again?"

Tong Guiyu slowly clenched his fingers and said, "It was my rashness that disturbed my foundation, leading to this point."

"That Zhenren came to ask once," Chan Qing said, "and this one dared not deceive him. I told him the truth about Xianjun's condition."

Tong Guiyu looked up. He remained silent for quite some time with a complicated expression. "This has nothing to do with him. He was willing to save me, a debt that this one surnamed Tong cannot repay... An unstable Dao heart and fundamental deviations are the leading causes of death for high-level cultivators, even more deadly than heavenly tribulations. This is my burden to bear. There is no need to involve Huai Qing Zhenren of Yao Wang Valley."

Chou Yongzhou's title was Huai Qing.

In fact, most of the cultivators who died during heavenly tribulations either couldn't withstand the Heavenly Dao's interrogation or had made mistakes in tempering their bodies and foundations.

The former problem was related to polishing their inner selves, and the latter was a problem that plagued all cultivators, even the Dao Ancestor himself.

Li Huanhan had also suffered qi deviations before, but he gradually found a way to regain control. With the help of Jiang Yinghe, he was able to negate most of the aftereffects.

"Those who are enlightened in the harmony path tend to experience the most complicated and bizarre road to love, which makes sense. I didn't

expect Tong Xianjun's Dao heart to destabilize because of love."

Tong Guiyu gave a bitter laugh and said, "If I had known back then, I would not have given him even a single glance, let alone realized his feelings for me."

Chan Qing gazed at him for a moment. "Immortal friend must be joking."

He was indeed making light of things. Even if he did know back then, Tong Guiyu would've still gone to meet him. Otherwise, he would have regretted it for the rest of hs life.

Chan Qing gently but firmly guided him in the right direction.

Never did Tong Guiyu think that he would have to one day rely on Buddihist methods to calm his mind. When he visited Jiang Yinghe a few days ago, he was already in a confused state of mind and could barely continue. Despite still cracking jokes, his state was perilous at best.

"Yes, it was just a joke." He continued, "A sword forged using a thousand hammers and a hundred refinements may be no better than a willow branch casually planted by the side of the road. I have seen a thousand beauties of this world, but I still feel that the emerald willow in the spring breeze moves me more. Isn't it the greatest joke of all to lose to myself in the end?"

As a monk, Chan Qing slowly turned his beads and silently listened.

The Buddhist incense continued to diffuse. At the moment when Tong Guiyu's words fell, the door to the meditation room was gently pushed open with a soft creak.

Jiang Yinghe, dressed in light-coloured robes, stepped in and closed the door. He sat beside the two men with his usual demeanour, saying, "So, even someone who traversed through ten thousand flowers can be plagued by frustrations. I am amazed to hear an amorous and prodigal person like you say such things."

After a pause, he grasped Tong Guiyu's wrist and poured in a trace of spiritual energy. He spoke while diagnosing the other's current condition. "Why are you talking about heartbreak with a buddhist cultivator? Even a dog is smarter than you."

Author's Corner

Author: Don't be like that, HeHe! Scold him and take Qin Jun, ah!

Qin Jun:

OceanofPDF.com

CH74 - AMITABHA (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe's spiritual energy passed through Tong Guiyu's foundation and spirit. He sensed the other's unstable and hole-ridden primordial spirit, which was nothing like what a Hollowed Cave Xianjun's should look like.

Unfortunately, Tong Guiyu was likely to be in a similar situation as Abbot Chan Qing.

He abruptly withdrew his hand and frowned at Tong Guiyu. "...Were you being truthful when you told me that your heart was wavering?"

That was the first question that popped into Jiang Yinghe's mind, and the look on Tong Guiyu's face was answer enough.

Tong Guiyu withdrew his hand and casually brushed his bloodstained sleeve clean. "I didn't invite you here for my sake, but I do have a favour to ask of you."

Jiang Yinghe vaguely knew what this request would be, but he didn't say anything and watched him go on.

Tong Guiyu said, "If I were to die unexpectedly, please take care of He Huan Sect on my behalf. I have already made many arrangements so that any incidents would have minimal impacts on the Sect. But the hearts of those belonging to He Huan Sect are not united. If the transfer of power to my successor is not smooth, then the small fries barring the way should be dealt with as necessary."

His words were not overly solemn, but there was clear killing intent laced within. To his side, Chan Qing averted his eyes slightly and muttered,

"Amitabha."

Tong Guiyu realized his faux pas. He turned to apologise, "This one surnamed Tong has misspoken and disturbed the Abbot."

Jiang Yinghe listened to what sounded like the last words of a dying man. Then he saw Tong Guiyu take out a book from his Qiankun pouch, entitled 'Last Words'. Flipping through it, there were actually well over ten thousand words written within, like a novel.

"There is one more thing." Tong Guiyu said, "I..."

He paused to gather his thoughts, which was rather out of character for him. Then he smoothly spoke, "I have tarnished the reputation of Huai Qing Zhenren. Yao Wang Valley's healing cultivators have always been pure. They should not be with promiscuous people like me. If my life comes to an end, I hope you, my good friend, could help me..."

"Take care of your widow?"

Tong Guiyu didn't expect him to say that. He took a minute to retort, "...A life-saving benefactor."

Jiang Yinghe emotionlessly listened until now. He tapped a finger against the end of his whisk. "You never faced such troubles when you were missing the emotionless part of your passion root. But once I returned it to you as I took mine back, you've encountered a life-threatening situation like this."

Tong Guiyu looked at him and said, "This has nothing to do with that..."

"Not necessarily." Jiang Yinghe changed the subject, "Take out Hongyan so I can have a look."

Tong Guiyu was silent for a moment. He raised a hand and retrieved his life-bound weapon from his foundation. As Hongyan's magnificent and vivid blade emerged, a pale peach sword pendant fell into his hand.

"You...remind me of another person." Jiang Yinghe gazed at the sword pendant and said, "The path to the Dao is right in front of him, but his heart wavers due to the appearance of another. He was unwilling to break away, eventually being dragged into a bottomless abyss."

The Dao Ancestor cultivated the Supreme path. Although very different from the Harmony path, the two shared some similarities. Those who walked the Supreme path could not love just one person, their love was meant for all living beings.

Therefore, when Jiang Yinghe appeared by his side, the Dao Ancestor's mind became so disturbed that he had to split his soul to live on.

Jiang Yinghe patted the book of last words in his hand and spoke about his own experiences dealing with this kind of problem. "The instability of your Dao heart proves that the relationship between you and your saviour is one that is different from the kind seen in He Huan Sect. From what I know, the Harmony path doesn't forbid polygamy, but only monogamy."

He was absolutely correct. Although Jiang Yinghe's cultivation hasn't fully returned, the breadth of his vision was far beyond that of any normal human.

"You want to climb ashore, but your Dao heart refuses to let you go." Jiang Yinghe looked into Tong Guiyu's eyes. "In that case, you just have to forget your benefactor."

Tong Guiyu gripped Hongyan tighter. A faint light surrounded the sword.

Jiang Yinghe gave it a glance before continuing, "In the teahouses on the banks of the River Styx in the Nether Realm, there is a drink to wipe away emotions. When you have forgotten how he helped you, I will personally kill Chou Yongzhou for you. Then you will never experience this problem again."

As he spoke, he observed Tong Guiyu's expression. The other person suddenly looked up during his heartless words, like he wanted to tell him to stop.

But when he saw Jiang Yinghe's expression, Tong Guiyu knew that these words were meant to test him.

On the other side, Chan Qing had already guessed Jiang Yinghe's intentions. But he still coughed lightly twice. "Amitabha."

Jiang Yinghe turned and said to Chan Qing, "My words were thoughtless. Forgive me, Abbot."

Chan Qing nodded slightly without saying anything.

Jiang Yinghe got a glimpse into Tong Guiyu's mind from his reaction. "If you can't bear to touch him, fine. You might as well risk it all in this case. I will preserve your spirit while you discard your cultivation and enter the cycle of reincarnation. If you recultivate under a different path and build a righteous reputation, you will be able to marry into Yao Wang Valley one day."

"Easy for you to say." Tong Guiyu was gripping his sword so hard that the back of his hand was turning blue and white. Blood spilled as the skin of his palm pressed against the blade. "Who knows when we will be reunited in the next life? Even if I have the guts to do such a thing, it could take hundreds or even thousands of years to complete! Can he wait that long?!"

Tong Guiyu was usually a laid back, playful and cynical man who liked to boast that he had seen it all when it came to 'flowers'. Rarely did he experience emotions so strong that he couldn't conceal them.

"My death alone is enough to settle my debt with He Huan Sect, but ruining Huai Qing's reputation for centuries and disregarding the 3000 year old rules of Yao Wang Valley... Such acts would definitely invite the scorn of others."

The blade in his palm sank into his flesh, leaving layers upon layers of blood on the sword. One side of Hongyan might be dyed in crimson, but the sword pendant on the other was still as clean and fresh as ever.

At this moment, someone suddenly knocked on the door of the meditation room. Kong Jing's respectful voice could be heard.

"Shifu, Huai Qing Zhenren of Yao Wang Valley has been waiting outside for a long time. He said that he wanted to meet with...Benefactor Tong."

The scent of Buddhist incense filled the room.

Tong Guiyu's hand relaxed. Only now did he realize he had cut himself. He casually wiped away the blood and closed his eyes. "...Little He, let's continue talking about that favour..."

"Maybe he's willing to wait."

Tong Guiyu paused.

Jiang Yinghe slowly brushed the whisk resting on his sleeve and said lightly, "How would you know if you don't ask?"

"How long would he be willing to wait for a momentary pleasure?"

"Before your return, I will naturally follow your will and render aid." Jiang Yinghe looked out the window and saw a small, white cat sitting on the windowsill outside, his tail all wet from the recent drizzle. "Even if it is a momentary pleasure, it is still far from the worst case scenario."

His words managed to block out all retreats, making it hard to disagree.

Outside, the kitten pawed at the window, trying to get inside. As the wooden window gradually opened, the sound of the rain became clearer.

Until Tong Guiyu stood up and walked past Jiang Yinghe.

Jiang Yinghe was not certain that Tong Guiyu would go meet Chou Yongzhou, but at least there was a chance now that he'd stopped holing up in the mediation room. He did not follow him out. Instead, he remained opposite Chan Qing and poured the Abbot a cup of tea.

Lan Ruo Temple's 'Morushui' was almost tasteless.

Chan Qing thanked him and watched as the little, white cat by the window jumped in and shook the rain from his body. He could tell from his scent that this was not an ordinary cat, but he didn't say anything as the cat cuddled in Jiang Yinghe's arms.

Jiang Yinghe hugged this sticky bun with one hand while saying, "His attitude was so negative. Did he lose his way after hearing Abbot's prediction?"

"A person's past and current life, their present and future...all are vast and boundless." Chan Qing said.

Jiang Yinghe nodded.

He suddenly grasped a point in those words. He raised his eyes and asked, "Past lives and present lives? Past and future?"

Chan Qing nodded and said, "Tong Xianjun came to the same realization as Jiang Xianjun. This was why he felt so hopeless and began to arrange his affairs without seeking other solutions."

So that was what happened. Jiang Yinghe thought as he glanced at the most recent task about finding out the pasts of his disciples. He couldn't help but ask, "Abbot, could you help me divine the past and future of another person?"

Chan Qing was silent for a moment. He seemed to already know who this person was. Finally, he just waved and summoned a water mirror. "It is up to Xianjun whether this will succeed or not."

With these words, he uttered a mantra and left.

The Buddhist incense lingered everywhere as the sound of rain falling continued.

—-

Jiang Yinghe could only make out a hazy shadow in the mirror before he was pulled into a void.

Before he could even confirm who he was thinking of, his divine sense had already entered the water mirror. The moment he returned to was under torrential rain.

In the night, the storm raged on as lightning flashed brightly above the clouds. The rumbling of thunder was accompanied by the mournful screams of a woman.

The woman shouted a man's name, almost shredding her vocal cords until they bled. Her desperation and pain pierced through the clouds.

Before Jiang Yinghe could make sense of whose perspective this was, he noticed the bright red blood spreading out from underneath the courtyard steps.

Drop by drop, blood dripped down into a child's eyes.

Suddenly, a pair of bloodstained hands carried away the red-eyed child. This stunningly beautiful woman, dishevelled and covered in blood with dirt on the hem of her clothes, murmured nonsense as she fled with all her might.

The courtyard was next to a dense forest. As she ran with the child in her arms, she cut down all who stood in her way, like a cornered wolf with a broken leg.

There were many who chased her, but most stopped their pursuit as time went on. Jiang Yinghe still didn't know whose perspective this was. He could only watch as this person hastily glanced behind them.

Immediately, he understood the reason why some people had turned back.

In mid-air, several cultivators wearing robes that identified them as members of the righteous faction surrounded a person. They all had calm and ruthless expressions, fully intent on getting rid of evil and—

Purging a threat from within their sect.

In the center, surrounded by the cultivators, a man covered in wounds rose from the ground. A barrier fuelled by his very soul stood behind him, blocking their path.

It was Li Yunxiao.

A peerless genius of the past.

This fact inexplicably surfaced in Jiang Yinghe's mind.

Just as the barrier was about to collapse, the man whose features were no longer distinguishable due to his wounds struggled to his feet. His longsword was dyed crimson by his flowing blood.

In the next instant, as the cultivators in the air shattered the barrier, Li Yunxiao detonated his core, annihilating both his body and soul.

He ceased to exist entirely.

There was little known about Li Huanhan's parents, only a brief account existed: Sword cultivator Li Yunxiao colluded with an evil sect and fell in love with the demoness Ning Fengyao, giving birth to a wretched heavenly demon. He was then pursued by the righteous faction and killed on a rainy night.

Jiang Yinghe looked at the sky.

The rain stopped with his death, but the sword-wielding righteous cultivators chased after the wife and son of their former fellow disciple, attempting to eradicate the root of the problem.

Clouds broke up the cold sky, softening the blood-red sunrise.

Author's Corner

HeHe, Tongtong: Balabala...

Chan Qing: ...Amitabha. You speak of those things again.

OceanofPDF.com

CH75 - FOR WHOM AM I STANDING AMIDST THE WIND AND DEW? (Draft)

TW: Very brief description of torture

Editor: Sahloknir

Li Huanhan's origins were only a few sentences long, even in the canonical records. The period in between his youth to his slaying of the Tian Mo School's Bishop and subsequent rise to power amongst those of the evil faction was lost to time.

Therefore, Jiang Yinghe was not prepared to see this scene at all.

Ning Fengyao had fled back to the Tian Mo School, which at the time was nowhere near the scale it had been during Li Huanhan's reign. This evil sect still had several equally matched competitors vying for supremacy.

The wounded woman was half-kneeling outside the screen, and the child with blood red eyes in her arms stared straight at the figure behind it.

The Bishop continued to twirl two beads in his hand.

"Dog who has lost her home..." The bishop began.

His words rang true. Ning Fengyao was once the Saintess, but she had eloped with a righteous sword cultivator and abandoned her sect. It was only because she had exhausted all other options that she returned to this demonic place that ate people alive.

"You want me to bring up this child," The Bishop tapped his pipe, "in exchange for your life?"

Ning Fengyao said, "My cultivation, my soul, my body...I am willing to present them all to the Bishop if you have need of them. So please, I beg you...protect my son."

Her voice was hoarse, like steel broken from heat or burnt porcelain. Her voice, that had once entranced the world, had been reduced to broken pieces of scrap.

The man behind the screen laughed.

"If I don't agree, are you going to follow Li Yunxiao's example and detonate your nascent soul?"

The woman stared at him with deadly intent. "I might as well try."

The atmosphere immediately tensed.

"Wouldn't an obedient Primordial God Zhenren be far more valuable as a pawn than a dangerous person who could blow herself up at any time?"

Ning Fengyao stood up, still holding her child's hand. "As long as the bishop makes an oath of internal demons to protect my son into adulthood and guide him in demonic cultivation, Fengyao is willing to agree to anything."

No one knew which of her words moved the Bishop. Perhaps it was the part about being a valuable pawn, perhaps it was the word 'anything'.

But the moment the candle in the room was about to burn out, the man behind the screen agreed to the deal.

There was some confusion in the perspective that followed. Jiang Yinghe was unable to discern what was going on for a moment, but when the lights stabilised, he saw another trail of freshly dripping blood.

This was the third time he had seen blood in a short period of time. Jiang Yinghe subconsciously searched for the injured person. He saw a youth in black that had one of his arms completely covered by knife wounds.

His bones could be seen from these wounds, which resembled haphazard slashes rather than cuts. However, the black-robed boy who looked no older than ten didn't even twitch. His eyes remained the colour of just frozen blood.

Jiang Yinghe looked around. His surroundings seemed to be similar to a water prison. Then the prison door opened and a young master in fine clothing walked in, smiling wickedly. "So the traitor's bastard is still alive, huh?"

As the young male stepped in, a dozen teenagers dressed in the uniforms of Tian Mo School disciples followed behind him. They wore expressions of disgust and contempt, but there was a hint of jealousy hidden within.

"As expected of a bastard. He's tenacious like a weed, just like that mother of his who was made into a puppet!"

"A communal apparatus is just that, one of the Sect's playthings. If Father didn't still have some use for Ning Fengyao's bit of strength, he would've dealt with this little brat long ago."

"Pei, I can't believe she had the face to come back and seek asylum. Someone like him isn't worthy of having the heavenly demon physique. He should be stripped of his spiritual root with one word from the young master..."

Unfortunately, this would go against the terms in the oath of internal demons. Everyone knew that this child had to be kept alive and allowed to cultivate, or they would incur the wrath of the Bishop.

Ning Fengyao's choice showed she was nothing more than a gambler gone mad. She had bet everything she had on a future where Li Huanhan would not only survive and find great success in cultivating, but come back and take revenge for his parents.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't bear to hear such words. He couldn't help but shift in Li Huanhan's direction after taking a look at that group of young children. When he got close, he realized that there were more injuries on this child's body.

There were knife wounds, bone fractures...and several centipedes had been forced into the huge wounds that were gradually healing. The insects struggled and thrashed.

Jiang Yinghe's mind went blank. He immediately wanted to go remove the foreign objects and heal those wounds. It was only when his hand passed through the child's body that he remembered—this was only Li Huanhan's past.

Jiang Yinghe's hand hovered for a long time before he reluctantly withdrew.

He would even pacify the turbid energy circulating Li Huanhan's body when he first took him in as a disciple. Now, after all the time they had spent together, how could Jiang Yinghe bear to witness such a scene?

How could the disciple that Jiang Yinghe couldn't bear to let suffer the slightest of injuries have gone through such pain?

He took a moment to calm himself, but his ears were still filled with the foul language of that group of teenage boys. Jiang Yinghe settled down and looked at Li Huanhan, only to see a foreign chill in those vividly red eyes.

The group noticed his gaze and their words abruptly stopped. An especially eager to please boy stepped forward and said, "Young Master, in my opinion, this lunatic's heavenly demon physique would be put to better use with you. Just look at him. He barely speaks and his mind is dull, what a waste of his physique..."

The young master backhanded the boy aside and scowled. He gloomily said, "Do you think I haven't thought of that?! If Father didn't want me to leave this bastard's spiritual root and life alone, I would've dug it out the day he dared to raise a hand to me!"

With that, the youth in brocade clothing turned and walked away. His lackeys trailed out after him.

In that case, then his injuries...They should've been from that young master venting his anger after Li Huanhan was subdued.

Jiang Yinghe shifted his gaze to the black-clad boy who remained silent. He could only watch as the child reached out and tore open one of his half-healed wounds.

"....Huanhan!"

He only remembered that the other party couldn't hear him after he had spoken.

Jiang Yinghe forced himself to remain silent. He watched as Li Huanhan tore open his wounds until they were freely bleeding. He watched as he crushed the centipedes writhing inside to powder.

He even watched as Li Huanhan pulled out the nails that had been hammered into his bones when he was subdued, as if he didn't feel the pain or difficulty of removing these restriction artifacts.

Jiang Yinghe no longer dared to look. His eyes could only follow the trails of congealing blood puddling on the floor, and the sleeves dyed dark red reflected in them.

During this process, neither said a single word.

The dozen or so embedded bone nails were casually tossed into the pool of blood.

Jiang Yinghe averted his gaze from the sight, turning back to the child. He saw him staring blankly at a spot before him with empty eyes.

There was no despair, no hope and no emotional ripples to be seen. Despite living under someone else's roof, being tortured in a hundred different ways, or the veritable sea of bloody grudges he was made to shoulder...there was nothing in his eyes.

Jiang Yinghe's heart skipped a beat.

It would be very understandable for a child to become difficult to handle after experiencing such trauma. Huanhan is already well adjusted, considering...

Just when Jiang Yinghe's thoughts came to a dead end, Li Huanhan raised a bloodstained hand to rub his eyes.

His voice was very quiet. It had a depressive quality not unlike a tomb that hasn't seen the light of day for a long time.

"...It's so dark."

Indeed, it was too dark here.

But this water prison was not the only place that was dim and lightless.

Jiang Yinghe was already reaching his limits after those three words. He had to take a considerable amount of time to steel himself before he could continue watching.

Torment like this could often occur, depending on whether or not someone was targeting you.

But even with many maliciously conspiring against him, Li Huanhan advanced at an incredible rate no one could match. He hid his strength by acting obtuse and speaking so little that some thought he was mute.

When he passed by Ning Fengyao, who had been made into a puppet, within the Tian Mo School, he was able to remain silent and calm, as if he had no feelings for her.

Meanwhile, the successor to the Tian Mo School indulged himself excessively in every way, relying on pills to raise his cultivation. Gradually, the Tian Mo School's Bishop began to inquire about Li Huanhan's cultivation and show him false goodwill.

But it was too little, too late.

The Bishop was unable to decipher Li Huanhan's true nature, but his own desires were laid bare in plain sight—

When Li Huanhan grew up, the Bishop would no longer be bound by the terms of the oath of internal demons. He could strip the boy of his spiritual root.

When the old fox bared his fangs, the young fox pretended to be remorseful. An elder and a junior played at deceiving one another, and then —

Just like the Feast of Hongmen, it was over in a matter of mere seconds. A venomous snake with pure black scales ended their lives.

Jiang Yinghe was all too familiar with Li Huanhan's character. His disciple was someone meticulous to a fault. Every one of his actions were decisive finishers.

Amongst the pools of blood and broken limbs scattered across the Tian Mo School grounds, the black-clad, red-eyed youth lifted his head and walked up the steps to the Bishop's seat. He locked gazes with Ning Fengyao, who was standing to one side.

Puppets were already dead. There was nothing behind her eyes.

Li Huanhan reached out and shattered the puppet imprint inside her. He picked up Ning Fengyao, who had been a walking corpse for many years, and left this scene of carnage behind.

Jiang Yinghe followed him and saw him burying Ning Fengyao at the peak of a tall mountain, amidst a sparse forest of cypress and pine. It was the place closest to the clouds in the sky.

The events that followed were very much in accordance with historical records.

He expanded the Tian Mo School and united the demonic factions, becoming the lord of all demonic cultivators. He was cold and ruthless,

treating human lives like grass and acting without the slightest bit of pity or compassion.

His power rose to a frightening extent, forcing the righteous sects to retreat again and again for three hundred years. He pressured several of the righteous cultivators who had executed Li Yunxiao to the point where their souls flew away.

His overbearing, evil nature allowed him to commit countless heinous sins.

Jiang Yinghe recited the account in his mind.

It was at this stage that the Blood Shadow appeared. It was Li Huanhan's internal demon, but it was so pathetic that Li Huanhan could play with it like a toy and manipulate it accordingly. In the end, it was even refined by him into a magic artifact capable of finding all things under the heavens.

Then it was smooth sailing for Li Huanhan. He advanced to the realm of Half-step Golden Immortal, triggering the heavenly lightning tribulation.

Even though Jiang Yinghe knew the outcome, he couldn't help but be more nervous than even Li Huanhan himself. But when the Dao's heavenly lightning struck, both were left flabbergasted.

There wasn't even a single word spoken of the questions about his Dao heart.

After the thunder had dissipated, there was only a silent, death-like darkness.

If one were to compare this tribulation to an examination, then it was one without even a single question.

One strike, then two, then three...

There was still only darkness.

Just as Jiang Yinghe saw when he looked at Li Huanhan before, there was nothing in those blood-red eyes.

It was all too dark.

His life, from beginning to end, was shrouded in darkness. Devoid of even the slightest shades of colour, only an endless black void remained.

As he finally witnessed this moment, Jiang Yinghe felt an excruciating pain both mentally and physically. Just when he thought it was all over after going through Li Huanhan's unbearable past life, he found himself shifted into a new perspective. The image of the White Crane Jade Manor appeared.

This seemed to be the time when he had just taken in Li Huanhan as a disciple. On one night, under the full moon, he had helped the other person soothe the clashing of turbid energies in his body.

At that time, although Li Huanhan was still as silent as ever, his demeanour had gradually softened during their ten years of cohabitation.

When he stepped out of the entranceway in his dark robes, the spirit cranes nestled nearby didn't even rouse from their slumber.

Li Huanhan stood outside without saying a word.

The approaching winter was apparent on this autumn night. The clear light of the moon above shone down like frost on the clothes of the man standing out in the biting cold at midnight.

It was only when Li Huanhan confirmed that the breath of the person inside had evened out, that he had fallen asleep that he slowly left.

The images in front of him dissipated.

It was a moment before Jiang Yinghe could return to his senses. He didn't shift his divine sense from the water mirror until a slight jolt of pain came from his finger. He looked in a daze at the kitty chewing on his digit before licking the bitemarks. Then, the person beside him lifted a hand and wiped at the corners of Jiang Yinghe's eyes.

"Shizun," A familiar voice rang out, "what are you looking at?"

Jiang Yinghe did not reply. Instead, he turned to gaze into those blood-red eyes before suddenly embracing Li Huanhan.

Li Huanhan was not expecting this turn of events. He steadied the other person on reflex before he heard his slightly muffled voice.

"...Look at you."

Jiang Yinghe choked on his words for a moment. "...You've made me cry."

Author's Corner

Li Huanhan: ....What?

(I don't understand but Shizun is so cute.)

Sahl

Awww Huanhan made me cry too, Shizun. *sobs*

OceanofPDF.com

CH76 - THE GOOD CHILD WENT TO BED (Draft)

Thank you, anonymous reader, for the Ko-fi!

TW: Descriptions of torture

Editor: Sahloknir

Li Huanhan startled. He didn't know what he had done to make Jiang Yinghe cry, but he had sensed something was off about Shizun as soon as he had entered the meditation room.

He raised a hand to wipe the corners of the other person's eyes again. As a faint trace of moisture brushed by his finger, he quietly asked, "What did I do wrong?"

Jiang Yinghe steadied himself before saying, "Lan Ruo Temple specializes in karma divination and tracing the origin of things, so I borrowed a water mirror from the Abbot to take a look at...the past and the future."

But it seemed like the future of those three were beyond the water mirror's ability to perceive.

Although he did not explicitly say it, Li Huanhan had already guessed what had happened. He just didn't know how much Jiang Yinghe had watched. He patiently waited for the other person's emotions to settle down before saying, "Those events have already passed. Shizun needn't take them to heart."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look. "How can I not when you're already in my heart?"

He rarely spoke so starkly and bluntly.

Li Huanhan suddenly froze, his bloodshot eyes pausing on Jiang Yinghe's face for a moment. Then he tightened his grip on his waist and pressed their lips together, whispering, "Why do you want to see these things?"

Jiang Yinghe told him the truth about how the system had assigned him a mission. Just as Li Huanhan couldn't resist kissing him again, a snow-white cat squeezed in between them, its soft, fluffy ears perking up as it pushed its way over to compete for favor.

Jiang Yinghe smoothly picked up the white cat and brushed it on the back. "Why did you come over, didn't I tell you..."

"Qin Jun is there." Li Huanhan said, "With him present, even if something happens to Tong Guiyu, it will not affect others in Lan Ruo Temple."

Jiang Yinghe nodded, and then asked with some surprise, "He...let you come?"

"He was originally reluctant," Li Huanhan meaningfully looked at the white cat in the other party's arms before faintly saying, "but it's better than allowing a monopoly."

...He just knew that these three were all aged jars of vinegar. They kept themselves busy fighting with the air all day. Jiang Yinghe didn't think the kitten in his arms was dangerous in any conceivable way. He brushed it one last time before instructing Li Huanhan to remain quiet. Then, Jiang Yinghe sent his divine sense into the water mirror once again.

Ripples appeared on the mirror's surface.

Because Chang Ye was around, Jiang Yinghe subconsciously thought of his youngest disciple. The mirror remained blank for several breaths before an image appeared before him.

It was a completely different setting from the tragic and dark starting point of Li Huanhan's past. After Jiang Yinghe got his bearings, he immediately

noticed a little kitten tumbling away in front of him. He instantly tried to catch the kitten, but someone was faster. A female devil with fox ears on her head and a knife wound on her face scooped up that little kitten. She said disdainfully, "Can this thing survive? Is this the new cub born to your tribe?"

The young woman with wings standing on the side nodded repeatedly. "Don't underestimate him because of his size. The test showed that he has a hidden bloodline. He might be just a cat now, but he might become someone great in the future..."

It was ten thousand years ago.

Devil tribes were everywhere, living in dark, stone caves sometimes illuminated by firelight. Right now, two tribes were conducting a transaction of their slaves and trying to pull the wool over each other's eyes.

This was the time period closest to the dark era before the Dao Ancestor split his soul, a world rife with killing and infighting. A peaceful transaction like this would only happen between two tribes of equal strength. As soon as this balance of power was tilted enough, the stronger one would invade the other and wantonly abuse their power.

And at this time, the overall strength and status of the devil tribes was much higher than that of the human cultivators. They often went on skirmishes to capture humans, either to eat or to sell them.

Although he had not shown himself for a while, only the reputation of Sword Saint Taichu gave them pause. After all, not even the Devil God, Hundun was his match. So even though the devil tribes were strong, they were wary of invoking the wrath of the strongest cultivators. Thus, they left themselves room to maneuver.

The little kitten in front of him did not fetch a high enough price. He was taken away by the fox-eared devil as a gift and kept casually in this tribe as a pet.

As time passed and this cat devil's spiritual power grew, he transformed into human form, revealing his stunning beauty.

It was also the first time Jiang Yinghe had seen Chang Ye without his mask and both parts of his face intact.

He was too green and innocent, but his stunning looks and obedience made the tribe keep him well-sheltered from the hard and cruel outside world. They raised Chang Ye as an actual cat.

He was well behaved and simpleminded, always speaking sincerely with glittering eyes.

Jiang Yinghe sat next to Ye-er, watching him wag his tail and lick his fingers. He froze when he got to the second lick, seemingly remembering that he had taken human form before silently shrinking back.

Jiang Yinghe was very relieved, thinking that his littlest disciple lived a decent enough life after all. No wonder he was so well behaved, cute and spoiled—

He had completely forgotten what kind of nature Chang Ye had possessed in his last life.

He was once a hypocritical, cunning, crazy, obsessed, megalomaniac who cared only for himself and his own desires.

Jiang Yinghe was so charmed by Ye-er that he was about to reach out to pet the cat's head.

Then the sound of devil fires burning and the roars of invading forces came from outside the cave.

This tribe, which had been growing steadily for many years, was finally challenged by the dark jungle. The predators hidden in the upper reaches of the river opened their bloody mouths wide and tore this once peaceful story to shreds.

In the midst of this non-stop battle, the tribe was utterly and completely conquered, its members enslaved. That fox-eared devil collapsed in a pool of blood after dragging herself out of the cave and pushing Chang Ye off a cliff.

Surrounded by burning devil fires, a predator glanced at the cliff.

"Should we chase after it? I heard it was this woman who pushed a cat devil down there."

"A cat devil?"

"Yeah, a pretty good looking one too." The little devil next to him licked his lips, "If we can find her alive, then..."

Their chief sniffed the air. "It's a male."

Thus, the invading clan immediately lost interest in Chang Ye and began to take stock of their spoils and dead. They had no idea that they would one day bow down to this fugitive who had fallen off the cliff.

Jiang Yinghe also did not expect this turn of events. One second he was going to pet a kitty's head, now he was watching a bruised and battered youth spitting blood and crawling his way out of the jungle at the base of the cliff.

Jiang Yinghe thought the youth would cry, but he didn't.

In his recollections, Chang Ye had always cried easily in front of him. But at this moment, he didn't even shed a single tear.

When had Jiang Yinghe even seen Chang Ye so hurt? This brat would come running over for reassurance after the slightest of injuries normally, but now he left a trail of blood behind him.

Jiang Yinghe just knew that his system was up to no good. The most he could bear to do to this little brat when he was being annoying was kick him off the bed. How could he possibly bear to watch him in such a state?

It took Jiang Yinghe a long time to build up his courage and continue perusing the water mirror. He followed the kitty, who had fled alone to find a new home and start a brand new life as a devil.

Chang Ye rarely came into contact with the other little devils. He never got involved in the chaotic internal conflicts outside or tried to expand his territory either. He was a lazy, vagrant cat that lived a carefree life.

Everything seemed to be going well. Jiang Yinghe breathed a sigh of relief. He watched as Chang Ye preened his stubbornly sticking up cowlick by the water. He looked as obedient as a house cat with his sharp claws retracted.

...He really is good looking.

The Shizun who had been deceived by beauty couldn't help but reach out and gently touch the cowlick waving this way and that on the youth's head.

Naturally, he couldn't actually touch it, but that didn't stop him from feeling happy about it.

After a few breaths of delight, Chang Ye suddenly looked up and seemed to notice something across the river bank. He identified what it was cautiously before approaching that person's side.

It was a human who had been wounded by a jungle beast. Judging by his clothing, he seemed to be a cultivator who had not yet built his foundation.

Chang Ye was stunned. He stood around for a while, as if he didn't know what to do now. After a quick moment of contemplation, he decided to take in this human as a pet.

Jiang Yinghe looked on with a head full of questions. Then he remembered that it wasn't unusual for devils to take in humans as pets in this time period. The knowledge helped him hold back the tiny bit of jealousy in his heart as he watched his kitten carry the man he had found home.

He propped up his lower jaw on one hand, trying to convince himself that a bit of companionship would do his solitary little disciple some good. He

also scrutinized this man who had stolen his cat, even thinking about dying his hair green.

By the time Jiang Xianjun's mind had eased, the human had easily accepted the fact that he was being kept as a pet by a cat devil. Over the next few days, he showed that he knew the habits of cats like the back of his hand.

Once Jiang Yinghe paid attention again, he immediately felt that something was not right.

He watched Ye-er's subtle and tentative attempts to get along with this man.

He watched the little kitty try his best to take care of his 'pet'.

He watched him teach this cultivator he had found how to move freely in the jungle and conceal his scent.

But then, he could only watch as the 'grateful' human cultivator drugged Chang Ye with a pot of medicated wine.

Jiang Yinghe was stunned.

After spending so much time with Chang Ye, he had a deep understanding of his disciple's nature and methods. He never believed that Chang Ye would be schemed against—until now, when it was happening before his very eyes.

...No one is born hypocritical, cunning and full of lies.

Jiang Yinghe's fingers tightened their grip. He watched as the cultivator pulled out a pair of pliers, jammed one end into Chang Ye's finger and pressed down hard.

There was the sound of bones cracking.

Chang Ye woke instantly. His eyes were dark and bright, not even really understanding what was happening at the moment the pain descended. But soon, the shattered bones stabbing into his skin and flesh almost made him scream until he swallowed the sound back into his throat.

"A cat devil this pretty should fetch a good price on the black market." The man said casually, "And one that's alone, too. The ones in tribes aren't easy to get, so this is a real bargain."

Chang Ye watched him unblinkingly. The chain artifact binding him suppressed both his cultivation and devilish energy. There was nothing but a constant and never-ending pain.

"Don't look at me like that, ah. You even taught me how to avoid being tracked." The man chuckled. He didn't seem to feel like the bound devil in front of him was any threat at all. He taunted, "How can there be such a...pretty idiot like you in a world like this."

The pliers moved on to their next target. Catching the first joint, they crushed the bone viciously.

The man didn't hear the screams he was expecting. Surprised, he glanced at the cat in front of him. "Don't you feel any pain?"

He met the other's clear, unblinking gaze head on. Only when he saw the cold sweat soaking through Chang Ye's shirt did he bristle. "If you cat devils didn't have such sharp claws to hurt people with, I wouldn't have to break your fingers."

He sounded extremely disgusted, as if he found such a brutal practice troublesome. Then, he smiled as he crushed the next finger on the youth's hand. "A pretty idiot, that's what you are. I've never seen such a simple minded and easy to catch devil...You've been well sheltered before this, haven't you?"

"The more innocent and kind you are, the more this world will destroy you. I'm just teaching you how to survive." The man said as he looked down. Fingernails and bones were mashed together, some parts still covered by a layer of bloodstained flesh. But Chang Ye did not say a word.

In the midst of this oppressive atmosphere, even the man torturing him began to grow agitated and furious.

"Why don't you scream? Why aren't you cursing me? Why do you keep looking at me?!" The man raised his voice as he became even more brutal. Like he was venting his frustration at being suppressed by another species, he crushed all of Chang Ye's finger bones.

Blood dripped down from between the layers of flesh. As the pliers moved, the sound of the broken bone fragments within the splintered flesh could be heard shifting.

Cold sweat trickled down Chang Ye's forehead, his body shaking due to the unbearable pain.

The man kept murmuring about what price he would fetch. Talking to himself about the benefits he would reap finally let him gradually calm down, but when he raised his head, he still met Chang Ye's gaze.

The youth was splattered with his own blood and immobilized, but his eyes remained as innocent and pure as ever.

"Don't look at me, don't look at me! Do you not know how to cry?! You have to beg me for mercy, you have to cry and curse me! You..."

At the moment the man was about to go mad from his gaze, Chang Ye looked away. His hoarse voice was heard after a moment. "You said I was...an idiot?"

This was his first time encountering the term, but he could sense that this would be the last time in this life that someone would use it to refer to him.

In the instant that followed, the cat bloodline in his body seemed to be usurped by something. His sealed bloodline broke through to the surface in response to his extreme emotional fluctuations, spreading into every meridian that flowed with blood.

Tianhou opened his eyes.

And the good child went to bed.

Author's Corner

Happy Children's Day! A wish for the good children. May you encounter hardships that help you become a better person. Without difficulties, one will always remain innocent. (From "The Incremental Scriptures", with modifications)

Rain

This chapter... It was like cute, cute, cute, squick. At least Huanhan's backstory was dark from the start. Don't declaw your cats, guys.

Sahl

I second Rain. Please don't declaw your kitty-cats. I can't wait for what Tianhou will do to this scum. * laughs evilly and looks nervously at editor cats * (Ragdoll x and Abysinnian x)

OceanofPDF.com

CH77 - THE ONLY ONE MISTAKEN WAS ME (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The iron chain broke.

A crisp, cracking sound was the only prelude to a wave of extremely horrifying aura engulfing the surrounding area. Ancient trees toppled as countless beasts cowered. In a single instant, the world seemed to have turned upside down.

The man had already stopped breathing the first time Chang Ye brought down his blade. Jiang Yinghe witnessed every detail. He saw how his youngest disciple's broken fingers struggled to grasp the handle, how the dull blade smashed easily into the flesh of the cultivator.

Chang Ye's hands tightly gripped the only sharp weapon in this cave. His expression remained sober but his eyes gradually darkened.

One stab, two stabs, then three...

The man had died long ago, his body smashed into pulp. Blood and guts mingled with the water and oozed out. The bloody droplets on the blade were thrown off and stained Chang Ye's cheeks.

But he didn't stop.

He was clearly venting his anger, but every stab wound made it harder and harder to breathe. The scene before Jiang Yinghe was dyed in red as blood seeped into every stony crevice.

Chang Ye was soaked in blood.

His lacerated skin, his fractured bones, all his surface injuries showed signs of recovery.

But the rest, like the innocence, goodwill and unconditional trust that led him into this trap, continued to fester.

Blood dripped from his ink-coloured hair onto the ground.

The corpse in front of him was no longer recognizable. It was closer to minced meat than a human. Finally, Chang Ye's hand slipped and the blade plunged into the ground.

He stilled.

Chang Ye blankly took in the sea of red before him, thinking about who knows what. He didn't seem to feel that anything was wrong. In fact, he even showed a slight smile to the human he had saved—like he always did.

A few crows cawed outside the cave.

Only the sound of thin, shaky breathing broke the silence inside the stone cave.

Tears mingled into the pools of blood that covered the floor.

When Chang Ye cried before, it was always to act spoiled in front of his shizun, or to beg his forgiveness. Jiang Yinghe might feel heartache, but he rarely believed his little disciple was truly aggrieved.

But now, Jiang Yinghe watched him desperately wipe at his tears and cough out blood. The youth could only kneel on the ground and cry so hard he couldn't say a word.

Jiang Yinghe wanted to hug him, but he couldn't even touch his hands.

In the end, Chang Ye found a quiet corner and curled up to rest. He had overexerted himself after just awakening his bloodline.

Jiang Yinghe sat beside him and watched over him.

The blood on Chang Ye's clothes had dried, and there were haphazard streaks of crimson on his cheeks from all the wiping. His fingers had already reconnected themselves thanks to the powerful regeneration ability of Tianhou. Only flesh wounds remained.

Jiang Yinghe wondered what the youth would dream of from now on. Was this the point where his dreams would no longer be filled with spiritual fruits, food, or fond childhood memories from his time with the tribe? Would he endlessly relive this especially dark night, haunted by the smile of that man as he broke his fingers?

But Jiang Yinghe was powerless here. He could only continue to observe.

He sat beside Chang Ye, watching the wounds on his little disciple's body heal one by one. The light of the cold moon approached Chang Ye's legs, but it could never reach him.

At a later time, the youth changed back into his kitten form and curled up in the corner. He covered his two bloody paws with his fluffy tail.

Jiang Yinghe remembered the many things that Chang Ye had done before, like how he turned into a kitten and approached with teary eyes to beg for attention when he was ignored.

How scared he must have been of being thrown away, abandoned.

Jiang Yinghe looked down at the ray of moonlight before him for the rest of the night.

Then, Jiang Yinghe watched as Chang Ye's cultivation grew by leaps and bounds after his bloodline awakened. He watched him leave this place of solitude and appear before the masses.

Chang Ye had always loved to smile, but everyone who knew him well dreaded that expression of his. Devil King Tianhou might appear to be

eternally simple and kind, but he was undboudetely the most scheming, insidious and cunning one of them all.

He climbed up step by step to become the King of the Devil race, a rival on equal footing with the Devil God of the time, Hundun. Chang Ye's influence spread from devil territory along to the rest of the world, until no place was safe from his sight. All who betrayed him would have everything taken from them, until they were eventually sacrificed to his sword.

The original name of his sword was Yuanhen Hui.

The higher he went, the more he became entangled with what he hated the most, unable to extricate himself.

This continued until Chang Ye and the Devil God turned on each other. Their battle shook the entire mortal realm. On the eve of war, Chang Ye changed the name of his sword. He abandoned the covert schemes he was best at and everything else as well.

The devils willing to die for him watched as Devil King Tianhou sealed the Devil God in the Endless Sky Watchtower with a single swing of his sword. He almost shattered his opponent's devil core before plunging through the clouds and into the mortal realm.

Shortly afterwards, a snowy plain was formed where Tianhou fell. For ten thousand years it grew larger and larger, frozen for eternity.

At this point everything dissipated.

The mirror became empty once more.

Jiang Yinghe withdrew his divine sense. He closed his eyes and pinched his brow. From the night Chang Ye awakened onwards, this story became incredibly depressing. Jiang Yinghe could tell as he watched his little disciple wield that blade and make all the devils who slighted him bow in submission—

Chang Ye was never truly happy.

Jiang Yinghe steadied his mind and slowly opened his eyes. The first thing he saw was a little snow-white, long-haired cat coming up to rub against him and kiss him.

Jiang Yinghe's sinking heart was instantly healed for the most part. He brought the white cat into his arms and couldn't help but squish his little paws. "Don't worry, you're safe with me now..."

First forced to become a stray, then a wanderer who was abused. After finally finding a home, he had to constantly worry about whether he would be abandoned...

Jiang Yinghe considered everything from the little cat's perspective. He found it all far too tragic.

Just when the white cat's eyes glittered and he intended to change back into human form, a shockwave of spiritual energy suddenly burst out from somewhere in Lan Ruo Temple. It swept through the room, toppling everything in its way and extinguishing all the incense.

Jiang Yinghe looked up in that direction. He heard the little monk in the temple knocking urgently at the door. "Jiang Xianjin, the Abbot is asking for you to come over. Hun Yuan Xianjun, he..."

Not waiting for the little monk to finish, the door to the meditation room suddenly opened. The person inside had already vanished from sight.

—-

When Jiang Yinghe rushed to the scene, the situation was already largely under control.

Tong Guiyu was still radiating shockwaves of spiritual energy, but each one after the first was contained within the room by a boundary of pitch black ghostly energy.

Chan Qing stood to one side. His gaze shifted occasionally between Qin Jun, who had crossed his arms and was giving off a ghostly aura, and Huai

Qing Zhenren, who refused to let go of Tong Guiyu's hand. As a monk, he really was at a loss for words.

Jiang Yinghe carefully examined the shockwaves of spiritual energy within. He frowned slightly. "It's already come to this, even after using the Buddhist secret method... We can't delay it any longer, the decision has to be made now."

Chan Qing shifted his Buddhist beads and looked down. "Amitabha Buddha."

It was even more inappropriate for the Abbot to interfere in the love affairs of He Huan Sect on Lan Ruo Temple grounds. He could only stop here.

Jiang Yinghe entered within the boundary. He took a few steps closer before he saw Chou Yongzhou's turquoise outer robe. The man's normally gentle and warm eyebrows were furrowed. He only slowly loosened his fingers upon noting Jiang Yinghe's arrival. His sleeve gently separated from the corner of Tong Guiyu's robes.

"Jiang Xianjun." Chou Yongzhou rose to greet him.

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly, not wanting to say anything more than necessary. "This master did not intend to ask Zhenren if you could bear to wait hundreds or even thousands of years, but I have been friends with this man for more than a millennia. He must dissipate his cultivation and reincarnate under my protection today. Only then will he have a chance to survive."

"Zhenren, step back."

Chou Yongzhou was startled. When he recovered he immediately shifted back a good distance. He watched as Jiang Yinghe sat down on one side and set up a protective formation.

As the formation activated, everything, including the shockwaves of spiritual energy, Tong Guiyu's shaking Dao heart, and even his figure, gradually blurred together and started to break up.

Chou Yongzhou remained nearby. As expected of the representative medical cultivator of Yao Wang Valley, he radiated the light scent of herbs and soft spiritual energy. Only the hesitance in his complicated gaze betrayed his nervousness.

The glow faded as the spirit dissolved.

Deprived of the support of his divine soul, Tong Guiyu's body scattered like common ashes to the wind. Jiang Yinghe sent the soul into the cycle of reincarnation. Then he picked up the Hongyan sword left behind in the dust.

Even though Hongyan was normally fond of beauty, it remained unresponsive and silent now.

Jiang Yinghe reached out and caressed its blade, his gaze coming to rest on the pale pink sword pendant still attached to the hilt. He turned to look at Chou Yongzhou.

The other was just as warm as he was during their first meeting, but traces of daze and despondency muddled his gaze. Chou Yongzhou didn't not ask for anything, not even the sword pendant. He simply bowed to Jiang Yinghe once again before taking his leave.

Jiang Yinghe nodded gently and watched his figure gradually grow distant. Then he heard Abbot Chan Qing suddenly speak.

"Huai Qing Zhenren was just an opportunity."

"What do you mean?"

"How can a person missing their passion root completely cultivate their Dao heart?" Chan Qing looked at Jiang Yinghe, "This is true of you as well."

Jiang Yinghe was stunned. Before he could ponder this statement, he heard Chan Qing call out "Amitabha Buddha" again, and continue, "Tong Xianjun had a good match before him, but his Dao heart prevented him from

embracing it. If he insists on continuing to cultivate the path of harmony, this problem will be impossible to resolve."

Jiang Yinghe recalled the look of worry on Chou Yongzhou's face and the several conversations he had had with Tong Guiyu. He had a rough idea of that person's nature. "A good match? Can you tell me why you think so?"

To Jiang Yinghe, he felt that Chou Yongzhou was not considerate or passionate enough, despite being gentle. During their meetings, the other never showed much emotion, keeping it all bottled up inside and hidden from others.

Chan Qing said, "Huai Qing Zhenren sacrificed himself to save Tong Xianjun from his qi deviation. According to this monk's knowledge, the Yao Wang Valley technique he used..."

"Abbot, please wait a moment." Jiang Yinghe suddenly felt that he had misunderstood something, "Sacrificed himself... Tong Guiyu might have been promiscuous, but he was very beautiful. Why describe it as a sacrifice?"

Chan Qing paused and looked at him with slight surprise. He stopped himself from saying something before falling silent for quite some time. "...Huai Qing Zhenren's foundation was stained due to their conflicting cultivation methods. He fell down half a realm."

A tainted foundation... It was true that the cultivation methods of Yao Wang Valley and He Huan Sect didn't mesh. After all, He Huan Sect's roots rested in taking in from the outside to replenish oneself.

Jiang Yinghe's thoughts came to a screeching halt. He suddenly remembered when these shockwaves would appear. Only the party on the receiving end of the He Huan Sect cultivation method would...

His mind went blank as subconsciously pursued, "He...He's the bottom?"

Tong Guiyu was a top??

Chan Qing didn't understand what he was saying. "...What does that mean?"

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment. "It's nothing. The only one mistaken was me."

...Why did it seem like even monks knew Tong Guiyu's preference better than him??

Author's Corner

HeHe: I thought we were both gay bottoms.

Li Huanhan: I thought so as well.

Qin Jun: Me too.

Chang Ye: ...Me three. Moving on, which sword do you think is sharper for cutting down Tong Guiyu?

OceanofPDF.com

CH78 - BLATANTLY FAVOUR HIM SO (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

All matters had been settled for now.

When Jiang Yinghe returned to the meditation room, Abbot Chan Qing was righting the incense burners that had fallen over and rekindling the incense.

The rich fragrance of sandalwood spread out. It settled Jiang Yinghe and let him send his divine sense back into the water mirror.

However, he was still somewhat apprehensive as to what he would see this time. Jiang Yinghe was by no means weak-minded after viewing the previous two back to back, but that didn't mean he wanted to see such tragic pasts.

But this time was even stranger than the last. The surrounding fog remained empty with no signs of change.

...The mirror can't show it?

Jiang Yinghe waited a moment longer to no avail. He withdrew his divine sense and looked up at Qin Jun.

The man had just returned to his side, so he was unaware of what had happend. He returned his shizun's gaze before asking, "What's wrong?"

Jiang Yinghe sighed softly, "...Nothing. Let's go back."

The dust had settled on Tong Guiyu's matter, so Jiang Yinghe only needed to follow the instructions in his book of 'Last Words' to ensure the transition of power in He Huan Sect proceeded smoothly.

Jiang Yinghe hadn't yet investigated Tong Guiyu's chosen successor, but he was not too worried, because he trusted his friend's decision. He decided to return to Peng Lai until that person officially took over the position.

On the way back, a cold drizzle began to fall, carrying with it the feeling of autumn approaching.

As the sound of the rain faded, the moon rose above the White Crane Jade Manor. The spirit cranes settled down to sleep under the night sky.

The little white cat lying in Jiang Yinghe's arms shifted to a more comfortable position, snuggling with him as it drifted off.

Jiang Yinghe glanced at the task's progress bar. Only Jun-er's portion was left. He slowly set down his book and recalled that water mirror. What was it trying to show?

Before his thoughts consumed him, a hand grasped his wrist. Jiang Yinghe looked up, but was unable to get a word out before the other person took him into his arms and carried him to the bed.

The white cat in his lap immediately woke up and jumped onto the edge of the bed, glaring at Qin Jun who had suddenly barged in.

"Li Huanhan said that Shizun was looking into our past and future." Qin Jun sat on the bed with him. "The process was over rather quickly when it was my turn. Did you get to see anything?"

Jiang Yinghe was stunned for a moment. "I..."

"On the way back," Qin Jun stared at him, "you were preoccupied and clearly wanted to say something. What was on your mind?"

Jiang Yinghe was bombarded with too many questions to come up with an excuse. Before he could answer, the other person spoke again.

"If the artifact was ineffective, why not just ask me?"

Qin Jun's hair was untied at the moment. The silver-grey strands flowed down to cover one side of Jiang Yinghe's pillow. The man's eyes lightened from a steely grey to the colour of smoke as he looked over.

When Jiang Yinghe still didn't respond, Qin Jun came close and kissed him gently again, whispering, "Or is Shizun planning to give up? Are you not at all curious about my past?"

Although his tone and expression both seemed normal, strangely enough Jiang Yinghe heard a strange hint of jealousy in those words.

He thought about it before saying, "It's not that, it's because...I've seen the pasts of those two...They were far too..."

Jiang Yinghe paused and turned to him, "I know you would've told me if I had asked, but purposely making others relive sad moments is to be an accomplice to their suffering. That's why I didn't ask. It's not that I don't value you...Wu..."

Qin Jun's kiss wasn't unpredictable and intense like Li Huanhan's. It was mellow and slow, steadily advancing deeper within and probing all the warmth contained in the other's mouth.

After removing his surface layer, one could peer into his insidiously spreading encroachment that silently came inside.

This was easier for Jiang Yinghe to accept. He stilled as Qin Jun interlocked their fingers and pressed him onto the bed.

The candle flickered faintly.

This was the scene Li Huanhan saw when he returned to the White Crane Jade Manor. He stopped for a moment, his blood red eyes flickering from dark to light and back again. In the end, all of his turbulent emotions were suppressed.

He picked up the cat by the scruff of his neck with one hand and expressionlessly watched from the sidelines for a while.

Jiang Yinghe was an active participant at first, but the more Qin Jun kissed him the dizzier he became. It was only when he heard Li Huanhan's footsteps that he jolted to attention once more. For some reason, he felt like he had been caught cheating in bed.

Naturally, the other person could immediately detect Jiang Yinghe's change in demeanour. He let go before his shizun pushed him away. Qin Jun raised a finger to wipe his slightly red lips, whispering, "Are you not willing to be kissed by me?"

What do you mean by that? Weren't you the guy that leaned in just now, the guy notorious for never letting go after getting a kiss?? What a shameless question.

Jiang Yinghe glanced at Li Huanhan, who was drinking tea nearby, before turning back to Qin Jun. He swallowed dryly, feeling like he had lost control of his courtyard for some reason.

"I'm not unwilling." Jiang Yinghe could sense Li Huanhan stop turning his teacup with those words, but he had no choice. Qin Jun's threat level was too great because of how close he was, yet Jiang Yinghe didn't begrudge this. Thus, he could only say, "...It was just too sudden."

Qin Jun raised a hand to wipe at the corners of his reddened eyes, whispering, "That's not it, it's because Li-shixiong came in."

Jiang Yinghe's inner thoughts were instantly exposed. He didn't know why this guy's aged vinegar was so sour, even though they were the same person...

"Does Shizun only like him?" Qin Jun asked a question he clearly knew the answer to (no) before sincerely kissing him again. "What about me?"

Jiang Yinghe's mind was spinning. He didn't know why he seemed to have a harem on fire when he was only in a relationship with one person.

Even if Qin Jun seemed all right on the surface, Jiang Yinghe wouldn't use words to test his bottom line. He calmed himself and soothed the other in a soft voice, "How could that be? Of course I like you too."

This guy only becomes more childish as time goes on.

That single sentence was enough for the hidden aura of danger around Qin Jun to fade away. He gave Li Huanhan a look before slightly loosening his grip. Massaging Jiang Yinghe's fingertips, he whispered, "Tell him to leave. I'll be the one by your side tonight. I will tell Shizun everything the water mirror could not."

Before Jiang Yinghe could reply, the soft sound of a teacup being set down could be heard. Li Huanhan's emotionless voice sounded.

"Qin Jun, don't go too far."

...Huanhan's about to get angry.

Jiang Yinghe could conclude that from just one sentence. He tried to turn and look, but Qin Jun turned his head back around with one hand, not even allowing him to look at others.

"If he doesn't leave, is he planning to join in?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't get what he meant by 'join in' immediately. Not until the sash of his light green robe was loosened and removed by Qin Jun.

He was taken into the other person's lap by his waist.

Jiang Yinghe had always been sensitive to this sort of thing. His tolerance only improved slightly after his disciples wreaked havoc on him a few times. However, the current situation was still too much.

He gripped the shoulder of Qin Jun's clothes anxiously, "...Don't mess with me like this, I—"

He was just about to say that it was fine if the water mirror couldn't show it, that he didn't have to know. But then Jiang Yinghe recalled Qin Jun's

previous words. He suddenly stopped speaking because he was worried his disciple would think that he didn't value him again.

This brief pause was enough for his lips to be sealed by a kiss. Jiang Yinghe's hold on Qin Jun's clothes tightened violently.

Outside the door, the sound of rain grew fainter. Moonlight entered through the window.

Jiang Yinghe's inky hair was loose. Soft and tangled, the strands slid by his shoulders, swaying slightly with his movements.

When his fingers were clenched, the slender digits appeared especially streamlined and beautiful, almost like carved works of art. Due to being kissed until he was out of breath, the corners of his eyes became faintly flushed. His lips also swelled, adorned with scattered teeth marks.

As the snow melted into water, he sank tenderly into the other's embrace.

Qin Jun hugged him tighter and asked quietly with their lips pressed together, "So Shizun is letting him stay?"

Of course Jiang Yinghe knew that Qin Jun was jealous just from the vinegar dripping from his every word. But he didn't send Huanhan out after a moment of difficult consideration.

Jun-er has always been the most composed one. Even if he was eating vinegar, he wouldn't act too excessively.

Qin Jun paused slightly and sighed into his ear, "...When he tosses you around, you always burrow into my arms."

Jiang Yinghe's ears turned red. Qin Jun's breath was next to his ear, spreading in bursts that almost soaked his skin through.

"When he makes you cry, it's Jun-er who wipes away your tears." Qin Jun continued, "If I could, I wouldn't consider such things, because just keeping you by my side is enough... But how could Shizun blatantly favour him so, just because I've been good to you?"

This sincerity in his voice made Jiang Yinghe completely forget about how he was tricked into doing it the last two times, or how he had been completely eaten clean. Filled with guilt, he took the initiative to kiss Qin Jun softly. "...It's not favouritism, it's because you listen to me the most. "

After saying it aloud, Jiang Yinghe felt like real scum. Making the more mature child endure more hardship really didn't mesh with his values as an educator. He thought it over some more before offering some words of comfort, "You're the one I trust the most. You..."

He was prevented from continuing.

The candles in the White Crane Jade Manor all went out at once, relit with ghostly phosphorus flames. That faint, lingering and cold fragrance spread as the rustling of clothes faded away.

Chang Ye had long since changed from cat to human form. He sat beside Li Huanhan with his chin propped up on one hand. As he watched, he transmitted his voice to the other person, "...This is what you two discussed? How many tricks do you have up your sleeves?"

"We didn't discuss this."

"...What, another tacit agreement since we're all the same person?"

"Sort of." Li Huanhan stood up and loosened his collar. He glanced at Chang Ye. "This was bound to happen anyway. Also..."

This dog Qin Jun always likes to go first. Of course he has many ways of softening Shizun's heart and making him agree.

—-

Birds sang in the early morning.

After the autumn rain, the sound of insects and birds chirping on Qing Jing Peak diminished more and more. The camphor tablets in the room were changed out. These precious tablets had a soothing effect.

Jiang Yinghe was in dear need of such a thing.

He thought carefully about the course of last night. The more he did the more he felt like something wasn't right. In hindsight, he felt like he had been set up.

He didn't make Huanhan leave because he was worried about upsetting him. He agreed to dual cultivate with Jun-er for the same reason.

Then things spiraled completely out of his control. At some point, the person grasping his fingers had become Li Huanhan. Although he was gentle, it was a completely different feeling from when it was Qin Jun.

Just like what Jun-er said, Jiang Yinghe hid in his arms when he couldn't take anymore of Huanhan's bullying...

How humiliating.

And if it wasn't for his little disciple being sweet and attentive by using his tail to pad Jiang Yinghe's back the whole time and lessen the blows, he might've not been able to hold on.

No matter how I think about it...this is...definitely collusion, okay...

Author's Corner

HeHe: ...Trap, it's all a trap QAQ

OceanofPDF.com

CH79 - MAY THIS BE THE LAST TIME YOU AND I PART IN LIFE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Qin Jun quietly told him everything last night, but Jiang Yinghe could barely remember half of it.

Even though Chang Ye didn't shift into his beast form this time, Jiang Yinghe was still very tired. His mind wandered a little as he thought back to the words he had heard last night.

Before he could completely recall, he felt a chill by his feet as the quilt there was lifted. A hand took hold of his ankle and raised it slightly.

A cool ointment was then applied, covering all the unsightly hickeys and teeth marks.

Jiang Yinghe subconsciously shrank back half an inch at the unwelcome memories this action brought back. The slight tightening of those fingers on his ankle didn't help. Images really unsuitable for this site came to mind.

Just as he became tense, Jiang Yinghe was violently wrapped in a hug. Qin Jun's voice rang out by his ears with deep amusement.

"What are you so afraid of?"

...Don't ask questions you already know the answer to.

"...I'm afraid you'll say I'm biased again," Jiang Yinghe settled the score after the autumn and pointed out the other's trap, "and blackmail me with that."

Qin Jun laughed. He leaned over and kissed the tip of his shizun's ear, saying, "Does Shizun feel like you're being blackmailed?"

Jiang Yinghe didn't say anything, instead just giving him a look.

The other person's motions never ceased. He pulled away Jiang Yinghe's thin shirt to reveal the beautiful body inside. Scooping up ointment with his fingers, Qin Jun dabbed at the reddened areas. He saw his shizun lightly frown.

"Does it hurt?" Qin Jun asked.

"No...it just feels a bit weird." Jiang Yinghe took the case of medicine from him. "I'll do it myself."

Qin Jun complied. His arms instead encircled Shizun's waist and massaged the strained muscles there.

Li Huanhan was not here because he had a lot of work to do as both the Tian Mo Sect Leader and a Peng Lai Dashixiong. Thus, he had to leave for a time after brewing tea to moisten Jiang Yinghe's throat.

It was understandable that he didn't see Li Huanhan, but where was Chang Ye? His littlest disciple was often idle and spent the entire day sticking to his side. What was he up to now?

As Jiang Yinghe was thinking that, he suddenly felt a chill in his palm. Looking down, he saw Qin Jun holding his hand and putting something on it.

It was a small ring made of bone that faintly radiated the aura of a lightning tribulation.

"A messenger token." Qin Jun said.

Startled, Jiang Yinghe raised his eyes. He heard the other person continue.

"I was born as a natural wraith in the Nether Realm. It was only after I came into existence that ghost cultivators began to appear in this world."

"I was given authority over my domain right after birth, and I encountered no troubles until my tribulation." Qin Jun paused and looked at him, his tone as casual as ever. "There was only one area in which fate slighted me."

His arrogant and disrespectful demeanour stemmed from how he had never needed to take anything seriously since his birth. Unlike Li Huanhan, who was born into an abyss of despair or Chang Ye, who suffered setbacks halfway, Qin Jun had never experienced hardship in his life.

That was, until his tribulations.

Each of his lightning tribulations were hundreds, if not thousands of times more difficult than the ones other races or cultivators experienced. The losses he suffered each time were nigh unimaginable.

The Heavenly Dao wasn't testing him, it was set on extermination.

The lightning tribulation stripped away the body he possessed at the time and crushed the foundation he constructed to smithereens. Every part of his body was shattered.

Only his phantom-like divine soul remained.

After experiencing further targeted hardship, Qin Jun abandoned his body and constructed one himself by solidifying his divine soul. He also changed out all his ghost cultivation methods in an attempt to leave all obstacles behind him.

Alas, the Heavenly Dao refused to let him become one with the Dao. It set impenetrable hurdles at the most important steps along the way.

For this reason, Qin Jun forged the Zhanyun sword. In order to pass this tribulation, he severed the luck of this world in two and crushed the

Heavenly Dao standing in his way beneath his feet. Step by step, he approached the final moments of his ascension.

But at the final step, he found that the Dao seed was incompatible with him.

Merging with the Dao...

After thousands of years pursuing this goal, the phrase became nothing more than a joke in the end.

His life was like some absurd joke. The entire world itself rejected his existence from the start, rendering everything he had done as meaningless.

But this matter was known to only him and the Heavenly Dao. In the eyes of other cultivators, races, and even other ghost cultivators, Sovereign Qin was born a wraith and suffered no setbacks to this day.

They said that the Lord of the Underworld was born with a golden spoon in his mouth, that he had never needed to make an effort.

And thus Qin Jun's arrogance and conceit were born. He treated those remarks like smoke, but he would always act like everything was effortless to him as well.

No one knew what price he had paid for his 'effortlessness'.

That's why he was moved when his shizun first mentioned 'the Spirit Patriarch' in front of him.

Qin Jun didn't say everything. He merely mentioned the most important points and glossed over the rest.

He was used to it by now.

Following along, Jiang Yinghe barely filled in the many missing elements and constructed a rough outline of Qin Jun's life. He tried his best to consider it a happy story, but he knew all too well that Jun-er must've not been truly happy either.

Just like Huanhan and Ye-er.

"However," Qin Jun looked at him and said, "it's not so bad when I look back on it now."

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback.

"Compared to that day when the Kanmi Mirror revealed my divine soul, when Shizun wanted to leave me forever... My past experiences were not even a fraction as painful."

That sentence alone made Jiang Yinghe's heart soften into a puddle. He could even set aside what this guy had done last night for now. He quietly muttered, "...You're saying these things on purpose."

"I am," Qin Jun responded, "but that doesn't mean they don't come from my heart. I mean every word I say."

He raised a hand and slightly lifted Jiang Yinghe's chin. Lowering his head, he pressed a kiss between his beloved's brows.

"Both Heaven and Earth have never tolerated me. Only you were willing to take me in."

—-

After that day, the Peng Lai Immortal Sect welcomed several consecutive autumn months, followed by the weather getting colder as winter slowly arrived.

Jiang Yinghe's cultivation gradually returned to its peak. At the same time, Huan Han Sect's succession was almost complete too.

The previous unification task had been completed, rewarding him with 20 unification points. Taking into account the point he had received for dual cultivating before, the progress bar had finally passed the halfway mark.

However, the relationship between those three hadn't improved much. Despite their temperaments becoming almost interchangeable, they still fed

themselves vinegar all the time.

After passing 50%, Jiang Yinghe finally took out that 'Journal of Observations' again. He first estimated its thickness before settling in to finally read all the pages that had accumulated. He flipped to the page after the last one he had read.

"...We sat down and sketched out three types of split souls and arranged the part that each would carry. As the most important fraction, Li Junye's innate true nature needs to carry his Dao seed. However, this means it has a high chance of being influenced by the burden and going insane like him."

"To leave enough time to set everything up, this plan could end up taking quite a while... He said he was willing to accompany me home if he manages to luckily survive. An apt way of putting it. In his current state, only luck could save him now."

"The second part will carry his acquired mentality, but it is suffused with far too many negative emotions. This is also the portion that affects the development of the mortal realm... The world that he created wouldn't reject this fraction once it gains sentience, right?"

"The third... We couldn't discuss the third fraction because this guy's moods change at the drop of a hat. He pressed me down today to forcefully kiss and even bite me. What is he trying to do, squeeze out a cat or a dog?"

Jiang Yinghe wanted to laugh at that. He thought himself to have quite a talent for journal writing. As he continued on, he fitted the pieces together in his mind.

"Four thousand and eighty-one years since the beginning of time, your Dao Ancestor squeezed a cat out."

"I don't know how he dared to send a part of his divine soul into it, but by the time I found out, he had already finished arranging it."

"This fraction of the divine soul was the first to enter the cycle of reincarnation. I expect to see it within a few years. But before that cat

appears, we have to split the remaining two parts. His realm fell after removing a fraction of his soul, but he was fine thanks to the Dao seed on him. On the contrary, he seems to be in much better spirits and even played chess with me for a while."

"This is good. It means he's calming down...But I'm starting to feel like I'm accompanying a terminally ill person."

"The day you and I will part is fast approaching."

The ink of the last paragraph was somewhat muddled, perhaps from tears or a slightly shaking hand.

Jiang Yinghe followed suit and breathed in. He only breathed out again after closing his eyes for a moment.

He turned to the next page.

The handwriting on the back was messy, only a little bit of it was carefully written, just a few words.

"You are the gentlest person in this world."

"The only one in the world."

Then there were a few accounts of their first meeting, of the two of them becoming friends, playing chess and drinking tea, heating wine in the snow, having discussions in the Endless Sky Watchtower and visiting the ancient forests and snowy mountains of the mortal realm.

One entry recalled how that person had taken a plum branch and fashioned it into an ornament for Wuchen. Even since, the fragrance of plum had infused itself into Sword Saint Taichu's divine soul forever. Not even reincarnation could cleanse this mark.

"Crane Immortal," Li Junye's tone was teasing, but his gaze was quietly insistent, "my mortal heart has been moved by you."

Li Junye cultivated the supreme path, and the supreme one should discard all emotions. In his eyes, every living thing should be equal without the slightest imbalance.

Wind blew on this snowy night. Sword Saint Taichu gripped his longsword that had never been tainted by mortal affairs and left with fluttering sleeves.

In the centuries of seclusion that followed, the mortal realm crumbled and degenerated in the Sword Saint's absence, quickly turning into an earthly purgatory due to the foundation of its creator disintegrating. This was the scene the Sword Saint returned to, and the one he described on the very first page of this journal.

When Jiang Yinghe came to the last page, the story of the two had not reached them reuniting yet. The majority had been blotted out with ink.

Only one line remained untouched at the bottom, in another person's handwriting. The words seemed to elegantly flow into each other, but there were a few points that seemed out of place.

The sentence was not in simplified Chinese, but the ancient runic script used long ago in the cultivation world.

"May this be the last time you and I part in life."

Jiang Yinghe looked at these words for a long, long time.

Something vague rose from the depths of Jiang Yinghe's mind, but it was far too muddled. Tracing along the words, he could only supplement the remainder with imagination to recall the hand that had gifted him the plum blossom.

...

How could the supreme one, someone who had renounced his emotions, possibly have a mortal heart to move?

Snow covered the white plums, radiating a cold and distant chill. There seemed to be the slightly bitter and sharp aura of a sword cultivator as well.

At the time, Sword Saint Taichu believed the admission to be a momentary mistake. He left and secluded himself for hundreds of years so that his good friend could restrain himself and stabilize his Dao heart.

But the sword pendant made from white plum was fastened to Wuchen's hilt, merging permanently with the sword spirit within.

And this breath that was dyed into his divine soul itself, even after tens of thousands of years had passed, led every part of him straight back to Jiang Yinghe's side.

Author's Corner

Normal Dao Ancestor: Gently embracing the wind, the moon, the snow, the plums. Meditating and contemplating the Dao like no other.

Dao Ancestor after being moved: I'm going to cripple my own cultivation. Of myself and this world, one must perish today.

Normal Sword Saint: You're a madman, aren't you? You like me? You think that I wanted to come to this earthly purgatory?! Don't be foolish! Save your breath and cultivate properly!

Sword Saint after being moved: He is the gentlest person in this world. The only one in the world.

Rain: So...everything went horribly wrong because Jiang Yinghe transmigrated in and managed to drive a god insane by acting tsundere? I don't know why I'm laughing so hard. Probably so I don't start crying ('•-•̩̩')

On another note, I found this really beautiful and melancholic song called 'Firelight' while working on this chapter. It reminded me a lot of this novel (▽)

Sahl: I'm not crying, you're crying...

OceanofPDF.com

CH80 - COMMUNICATING HOW THEY FELT (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

Jiang Yinghe set down his book.

A light snow fell on this early winter day, draping Qing Jing Peak in a layer of white. As there were few disciples to clean it away, the snow would be left to melt on its own.

Jiang Yinghe had just put the book back down when he heard a crisp knock at the door amidst the chirping of the spirit cranes. A Peng Lai disciple could be heard passing on a message.

He answered casually and willed the entranceway to open, revealing a large portion of the interior. A long screen obscured the remaining space from visitors. They could only smell the incense wafting from within.

The screen was very eye-catching due to its lifelike illustrations. Sunlight flooded into the immortal manor, shining down on the sleeve of a snow-white cultivator robe, visible on one side.

The messenger disciple subconsciously held his breath and stared at the screen. He was momentarily distracted when a figure stepped out from behind it. Only after half a second did he hastily say, "This disciple greets Xuan Wei Xianjun. This letter is an invitation for Xianjun to attend the succession ceremony of He Huan Sect's new Sect Master."

Jiang Yinghe received the invitation and the several books accompanying it. He glanced over the seal with his spiritual sense, before flipping it open and

remarking lightly, "Their new sect master?"

Even Tong Guiyu was only the Deputy Sect Master. The true leader of He Huan Sect was still in seclusion. Thus, even if his friend had arranged a successor, they would only be inheriting the title of 'Deputy Sect Master'.

The disciple hesitated for a moment to organise his thoughts. "The He Huan Sect Master has been in seclusion for almost 600 years. Only recently has news of his death been made public. He is said to have passed away almost 300 years ago."

Jiang Yinghe's finger stilled on the invitation. He recalled the look on Tong Guiyu's face during their last conversation and asked another question, "Why was the matter hidden for so long?"

"The explanation He Huan Sect gave was that their Sect Master passed away due to helping Tong Xianjun. Tong Xianjun learning of this might have caused his heart to waver..."

"Nonsense."

Jiang Yinghe coldly looked down at the handwritten invitation. His starry eyes glittered as hints of emotion leaked into his normally tranquil voice.

"He cultivates the harmony path, not the life and death path. If his heart is so easily shaken, then he need not live on in this world."

Jiang Yinghe was halfway through his sentence when he remembered that Tong Guiyu's Dao Heart had indeed shaken for another. His eye twitched.

"Suppressing this news was just someone's attempt to catch others off guard."

Jiang Yinghe said no more. He turned to look at the junior behind him. "You've done well coming here. You may leave."

The spirit cranes seemed to understand his intentions, for the entranceway closed a moment later.The disciple could only see the White Crane Jade Manor's stone plaque and the surrounding White Crane pine forest now.

He stood in front of the door in a daze, the words 'You've done well coming here' echoing in his mind. From those words, this disciple seemed to sense a touch of tenderness from the cold and distant aura surrounding Jiang Xianjun.

—-

The succession of a sect master was definitely an important event. Thus, this invitation would undoubtedly be addressed to Peng Lai Sect to show respect. However, Jiang Yinghe was the only one who could attend in Peng Lai's current state.

Yan-shijie was in charge of the Sect and could not easily leave. Additionally, Jiang Yinghe's status as a Xianjun of the Hollowed Cave realm would be sufficient for any occasion.

This was the second time that Jiang Yinghe had headed to He Huan Sect as a representative of his Sect, the first being five hundred years ago during the last Sword Conference. There wouldn't be any competitions this time, but that didn't make this any less grand an occasion. A group of disciples, each the leader of their own generation, would be going along with Xuan Wei Xianjun.

The furnishings inside the carriage artifact were the same as before. It was still followed by Peng Lai's white cloud vessels, which carried the Sect's disciples along with the prepared gifts. Such a show was a rare sight indeed.

Inside the flying carriage, Jiang Yinghe once again read through the books that were sent with the invitation. He reconfirmed that they were...definitely novels from the Lan Ling Publishing House.

My Overbearing Disciple Fell in Love With Me，The Days I Spent In a Secret Room With Shizun ...Hiss.

There were even serialized book numbers that separated the books into genres.

Jiang Yinghe flipped through a few pages, not knowing why these were sent to him until he reached the 'Acknowledgements' section at the back.

'This junior Wang Mengzhou pays his respects to Xianjun. Because Shifu informed this junior how Xianjun enjoyed this kind of literature, I have enclosed some with the invitation. This junior is one of the authors at Lan Ling Publishing House. If Xianjun has any corrections or pointers that he would like to impart, this junior awaits at the Sect.'

Wang Mengzhou...Isn't he the person Tong Guiyu chose as his successor?

Why is this junior writing this kind of degenerate pornography that somehow slipped through censorship instead of studying properly? Just what did Tong Guiyu teach people...?

Jiang Yinghe's thoughts trailed off here. He reassured himself that the people of the cultivation world matured early. That someone one or two centuries old couldn't be considered young anymore, before he barely managed to stop condemning his friend.

As he pondered over this page, the little cat that had been sharpening its claws slowly padded over. Its fluffy tail came over and covered the book.

Jiang Yinghe was stunned. He pushed the puffy, interfering tail aside. A single word was all he managed to get through before a pair of soft and white kitty paws firmly pressed down on the book.

...Is he competing for favour?

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a moment before he pushed the little cat's paws away too.

But then Chang Ye plopped his entire cat body down on the book. Round inky orbs peered innocently over at him.

"You..." Jiang Yinghe raised his eyebrows slightly, "Were you unable to sharpen your claws or was the small dried fish not tasty?"

Of course Chang Ye wasn't the kind of superficial kitty that would be distracted by small dried fish. To him, nothing beat taking a nap in Shizun's lap. So he tentatively stretched out a paw to grasp a corner of Jiang Yinghe's outer robe.

Jiang Yinghe caught how that paw seemed to tense and shrink back as he looked down. Then the cat dove into his arms in one fluid and light motion.

The kitty rubbed and rolled all around his lap before catching his wrist with his fluffy tail. He blinked very seductively at Jiang Yinghe, while radiating the fresh fragrance of a green tea cat.

But despite that...

He was still very cute.

Jiang Yinghe's willpower shook. He put down the novel and softly brushed the kitty in his arms. Then the little sharp teeth that couldn't be cute nibbled at his fingertips.

...How could reading porn be more enjoyable than stroking a cat?

Jiang Yinghe immediately identified his main target: that big, bushy tail. He started massaging up and down its length, completely unaware of how the pointed ears of the white cat in his arms twitched. He stuck out his tongue to lick his shizun.

Then the world seemed to upend itself. The docile cat that used to be lying in his lap turned back into a red-robed youth that pinned him to his seat with a tight embrace.

Before Jiang Yinghe could say anything, a pair of watery, ink-coloured eyes stared him down. The other person was a magnificent and unparalleled beauty, with the pitiful innocence of someone who was naive about the world.

Jiang Yinghe was instantly bewitched by this face again. He even forgot what he wanted to say. Chang Ye's voice was quiet and aggrieved, "Shizun

only likes cats and not Ye-er."

Where exactly did his aggravation stem from? Jiang Yinghe didn't quite understand his vinegar-logged logic. He softly said, "What makes you think I don't like you?"

Chang Ye moved closer and said seriously, "Shizun is always shy or angry from embarrassment around me. You always kick me off the bed too, but..."

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look. "I was angry from embarrassment? Kindly recall what you were doing at the time. Have you no shame? Get off of me."

Chang Ye seemed to realize his case was stronger when he didn't say anything. He leaned over and kissed the corner of Jiang Yinghe's lips, continuing quietly, "But Shizun just touched Ye-er."

Jiang Yinghe was temporarily incapacitated by those soft lips brushing against his and the pleasant voice in his ears. He considered rejecting his little disciple, but couldn't get the words out for now.

"Won't Shizun take responsibility for me?" Chang Ye managed to go on with a straight face, "Ye-er is all worked up now."

"It's not like I know where you can and can't be touched. You're clearly using this as an excuse."

Jiang Yinghe was about to go on when this little bastard tightened his grip on his waist and sealed his lips with a kiss.

The fragrance of Chang Ye's body was so very intoxicating as it permeated Jiang Yinghe's surroundings. It felt like hibiscus and begonia blossoms were in full bloom, dripping with soft beads of moisture from overexerted stems.

This scent sent Jiang Yinghe astray. The slight pressure on his chest made him feel somewhat breathless, but the other person was gentle. He never upset the agreed upon balance between them. All that was left was their breaths that eventually synced into one and Cheng Ye's drooping dark eyelashes.

He whispered after their lips parted, "Does Shizun like me a little more now...?"

It was really hard for Jiang Yinghe not to nod.

The tighter he was held, the more he could feel Chang Ye's almost childlike sense of possessiveness. But as the kiss deepened, it became clear how much the other cherished him and feared his rejection underneath his veneer of innocence.

He tried hard to leave a better impression in his shizun's heart so that Jiang Yinghe might like him even a hint more.

Just as Chang Ye's large tail came over and circled around his waist, the door of the flying carriage suddenly rattled, shaking the bead curtain there.

"Pei. As expected of Little Shidi."

Qin Jun paused. The corners of his lips twitched upwards to show a very fake smile as he spoke.

He walked inside, and grabbed the book Jiang Yinghe was working through for a look. Then he righted the pens, ink, paper and inkstones Chang Ye had thrown into disarray. Finally, he deigned to glance at this cat's ears and tail, as if he thought this means of competing for favour was very despicable.

But the wraith didn't seem to realize his thoughts weren't exactly pure either.

"So can I say 'sharing is caring' this time?"

Jiang Yinghe was a little disoriented before, but all of the soft feelings inside him were swept clean by that question. The only thought left was a prayer, "Oh Omnipotent Heavenly Father, this one's waist really can't take any more."

He pushed away Chang Ye and straightened his clothes before taking a seat. "There will be no sharing... Why did you come in anyway?"

Qin Jun glanced at his little shidi before replying, "Li Huanhan said that devil beasts in heat will try to do it anywhere. It would damage Shizun's clean reputation if the accompanying disciples heard anything, so he sent me in to...interf-supervise."

Although Jiang Yinghe didn't really care about how clean his reputation was, this place did seem to be inappropriate after further consideration. He nodded.

Qin Jun noted his agreement and smoothly grabbed Chang Ye by the back of his collar with a slight smile. "Come little Shidi, let's go be honest with our feelings"

Chang Ye didn't even have to think about whether Qin Jun was doing this on purpose or not. From the moment this guy said 'sharing is caring', every one of his words were part of a scheme to drag him away from Shizun's side.

He didn't shake off Qin Jun's grip on his collar until they had left the carriage. Looking up, Chang ye saw Li Huanhan standing in front of the white crane flying carriage. He asked calmly and casually, "Did you stop it?"

The question was directed at Qin Jun, but Li Huanhan wasn't waiting for a reply.

He turned his head and continued, "There are still things that must be done at He Huan Sect. Instead of bullying Shizun, why don't we be honest with our feelings?"

...Since they became disciples, there was only one way to 'communicate how they felt' on Qing Jing Peak. While it could be called exchanging pointers on the surface, in reality it was fighting each other to the death.

Author's Corner

Chang Ye: Why is it so hard to monopolize Shizun. Hugging myself and crying qaq.

Sahl: On the last five chapters. Hugging myself and crying qaq.

OceanofPDF.com

CH81 - SHARING IS CARING (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

After that, no one came in and made a fuss until they reached the He Huan Sect. In this rare moment of peace and quiet, Jiang Yinghe slowly finished the rest of the books Wang Mengzhou had sent. He found some of the plots very clever and fascinating.

There wasn't much sexual content, and the few instances were quickly glossed over. Perhaps the subtlety was because these stories were meant as a gift for a senior.

The four of them only reappeared after arriving at He Huan Sect. Many of the He Huan disciples were in a hurry. Even their greetings revealed a vague sense of sadness.

Tong Guiyu had managed this Sect for centuries. He had watched these juniors grow up. Even if his reputation wasn't exactly stellar within the righteous path, he did show some kindness to the disciples.

The person who came to welcome him this time wasn't Protector He, but a handsome youth of about seventeen or eighteen. A pelt the colour of snow draped around the shoulders of his dark blue robes lined with black and gold. Protector He stood behind him.

"Mengzhou greets Senior."

Wang Mengzhou stepped forward and bowed his head.

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly. He followed the youth into the hall without saying anything.

Wang Mengzhou was a disciple of Tong Guiyu, but his status hadn't been made public before. This person, who stayed at the Lan Ling Publishing House to study and learn about the path of harmony, was Tong Guiyu's appointed successor.

Jiang Yinghe had no objection to his friend's choice, nor did he question this junior's ability to do the job. He was only here to do what Tong Guiyu had asked of him: to silently remain by Wang Mengzhou's side.

The He Huan Sect main hall was consumed by strife and bickering. Many of the He Huan elders clung to the news of the Sect Master's death, refusing to allow the successor appointed by the Deputy Sect Master to take direct charge of the Sect.

Then the doors of the hall opened and shut. The messenger disciple announced Peng Lai's arrival, heralding a sudden silence in the hall.

Jiang Yinghe stepped into the main hall, surrounded by Li Huanhan and Qin Jun. The little cat, Chang Ye, had never liked such occasions.

Without a word, he was brought to his seat by Wang Mengzhou. He seated himself in silence and stroked his whisk, waiting for someone else to be the first to speak.

But no one dared to be so presumptuous.

This eerie stalemate dragged on. Many quietly peered over, only to avert their eyes for fear of causing offence.

Representatives from Guang Han Palace, Ying Zhou School, Yao Wang Valley and all the other righteous immortal sects occupied the other seats. Not one looked familiar. Only Chou Yongzhou stood and bowed to him.

Huai Qing Zhenren has always treated him with respect for saving his life.

A long time passed before a He Huan cultivator stroked his beard and spoke. His words were rather tentative. In front of Jiang Yinghe, even those who had beards reaching the floor had to behave as a junior.

It wouldn't do for Jiang Yinghe to interfere in an internal matter of He Huan Sect, but his presence alone spoke volumes about his stance. It was invaluable help.

By the time three incense sticks had finished burning and the tea had been refilled once, He Huan Sect had finished negotiations. Something like a court of elders was established to assist Wang Mengzhou. After thinking about it for a while, Jiang Yinghe concluded this was probably the cultivation world's version of a constitutional monarchy.

With everything settled, the ceremony began. None of the sects were allowed to leave until it was finished.

After everyone departed, Wang Mengzhou came once again to Jiang Yinghe's side. He spoke for a bit about his shifu's last instructions, also mentioning that Lan Ling Publishing House's collections would always be open to Jiang Xianjun if he enjoyed them.

...What in the world did Tong Guiyu say to make this child think I like those strange books?

Jiang Yinghe was about to refuse when he looked up and noticed Chou Yongzhou lingering nearby. He was staring out the doors of the He Huan Sect main hall.

Jiang Yinghe followed his gaze. There were two statues outside of a man and a woman representing a harmonious couple.

The bitter winter wind and light snowfall from earlier dusted the statues' hair and shoulders with a layer of white. It was gradually being swept away by the wind.

Chou Yongzhou didn't say anything for the longest time. Then he pulled up his collar and turned to leave after a gentle glance at Wang Mengzhou.

His retreating figure seemed thin and lonely, even slightly depressed.

Jiang Yinghe watched him leave. He heard Wang Mengzhou speak.

"Xianjun, senior Huai Qing, he..." the teenager hesitated for a moment, "for my shifu's sake, his status in Yao Wang Valley has been greatly diminished. He also seems rather down lately and rarely smiles. However, Zhenren still takes great care of his juniors."

"En." Jiang Yinghe didn't turn away for a long time. He suddenly had a feeling the other person wasn't down because of the impact on his reputation and the criticism he had received from Yao Wang Valley.

Just like the void left during the three hundred years or so before Jiang Yinghe's reincarnation, what Chou Yongzhou saw were not snow-covered statues, but the uncertainty awaiting him for perhaps hundreds or thousands of years, until that person returned to his side.

Jiang Yinghe sighed. He reached out and patted Wang Mengzhou's shoulder, saying, "Tong Guiyu won't be able to come back to He Huan Sect any time soon. You have to work hard and stand on your own two feet to protect those important to you."

Wang Mengzhou looked up at him, seemingly unable to comprehend how cold this world could be just yet. Nonetheless, he nodded seriously.

—-

He Huan Sect had long since prepared residences for the sect representatives sent to observe the succession ceremony.

Jiang Yinghe also finished preparing Wuchen. All that was left was to melt it and recast his sword. He stayed in his room to work on the main points. The entrance of another person went unnoticed.

Until the rich dark colour of ink spread into the inkwell from the ground inkstone.

Jiang Yinghe didn't need to raise his eyes to know that Li Huanhan was by his side.

The two of them did not need words for there to be a tacit gentleness between them. Li Huanhan had lit the candles by the time it was getting dark, but he still held down Jiang Yinghe's wrist.

"Don't write anymore." He said, "You were frowning just now. Are you tired?"

Jiang Yinghe had only just set aside his pen when he was picked up by the other person. He hadn't expected such a sudden move. "...I'm not tired. Rather, what's going on with you?"

Li Huanhan immediately pressed their lips together before hugging his shizun tightly around the waist and bringing him to bed.

Jiang Yinghe's mind was in turmoil as he heard a deep voice ringing in his ears.

"...Does Shizun's progress bar show anything?"

Jiang Yinghe hadn't received any new tasks these days. If there was any progress, it would've been the few percentages from dual cultivating with his disciples. Thus, he just remembered that it was at 50% and thought no more of it. He took a look after Li Huanhan's reminder.

...51%?

Jiang Yinghe paused. He didn't know where this extra 1% had come from. Just as he pondered this, he saw Li Huanhan extend a hand and produce a dense and wrathful current of demonic energy.

Before Jiang Yinghe could ask, the demonic energy suddenly underwent changes. Its temperature plummeted until cold and ghostly miasma lingered between Li Huanhan's fingers.

Jiang Yinghe couldn't speak at this astounding sight. He looked up with a gaze filled with questions, and the other person obliged.

"I exchanged pointers with my little shidi yesterday and unintentionally discovered this."

He said it lightly, with emotions not much different from usual.

...The increase in fusion progress should be because of this.

Jiang Yinghe held his hand. The miasma underwent another transformation into the unpredictable and flighty devilish energy. Then everything returned to silence.

"I asked Qin Jun and Chang Ye. They are also experiencing this." Li Huanhan gazed at him and said, "This should be the first sign."

Jiang Yinghe didn't know what emotions the other felt as he said those words. But when he looked up, he saw a deep calmness in those blood-coloured eyes, with barely any sadness or frustration. However, this serenity only made his heart tremble more.

Li Huanhan lowered his head and kissed him gently, whispering, "Is there a place for me in Shizun's heart?"

Jiang Yinghe couldn't speak. He nodded.

"Then that's enough." Li Huanhan said, "It is the best resting place for me."

Jiang Yinghe's fingers tightened their grip on his lapels. "...Don't say that. You're going to make me...feel like I'm about to lose something."

"No." Li Huanhan corrected with gentle patience, "This isn't loss. I am simply returning to your side for real this time."

"As the fusion progresses, a stabbing pain plagues my heart." He said by Jiang Yinghe's side, "I want to appear before you as a cultivation partner, not as a disciple before his master like now."

"I too want Shizun to...no longer be restrained by reputation, the divide between good and evil, or the distance a master and disciple should

maintain. I want you to be forevermore the moon surrounded by stars, the leader of the immortal path untouched by mortal affairs."

Li Huanhan took his hand in his. Their warmth mixed and mingled.

"Retain your purity. I will return cleanly to your side."

This was the person Li Huanhan treasured the most, someone whose every frown was more than he could bear. How could he possibly be willing to make his beloved suffer even a little for his sake?

Jiang Yinghe felt that his mind always stopped working when he looked at this person. He couldn't distinguish between the complicated emotions he was experiencing, but there was something he knew with unparalleled clarity—

How much he loved him.

Jiang Yinghe leaned over and kissed him. Just when things grew heated, a cat suddenly meowed.

Jiang Yinghe's movements paused. He turned towards the door to see Qin Jun standing there with a cat in his arms.

It was hard to imagine that, given Qin Jun's relationship with Chang Ye, he would actually hold that little green tea cat properly one day instead of by the scruff of its neck.

Qin Jun let out a long sigh. "As expected of Li-shixiong. You move so fast."

While he spoke, he reached up and grabbed a ruby-eyed black snake off his body. The Blood Shadow residing within this snake body had gone into hibernation. It didn't shift even as it was pulled off.

"It mistook me for someone. Came crawling onto me after I played with your demonic energy for a while." Qin Jun carelessly threw the black snake towards Li Huanhan, "If I hadn't been watching it, it would be in Chang Ye's stomach by now."

Li Huanhan took it without expression. He pressed a few points on the snake's body and it immediately woke up, twisting itself onto his fingers like a pretzel.

Li Huanhan stared at the other two-thirds who so rudely disturbed him. His voice was faint. "Anything else?"

"Also..." Qin Jun tossed the white cat in his arms in his shizun's direction before speaking very sincerely to Jiang Yinghe, "I can say 'sharing is caring' now, right?"

Jiang Yinghe's ears turned red. His mind was in utter chaos as the other person spewed those shameless words in such a gentlemanly tone. "He's not the only one feeling that way. San-er and I are also quite pitiful. How can Shizun be so biased..."

He called me biased again...

Jiang Yinghe's bottom line was nonexistent at this point. He turned to look at the light snow outside the window, quietly stumbling through his words, "...If you want some then...then come get it, I guess..."

Author's Corner

This slope's too steep for my little bike. (stare)

So I gave up on my cart and started pushing my friend's work.

(followed by summary of another novel)

OceanofPDF.com

CH82 - I'M NOT IN A HURRY, REALLY (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

He Huan Sect really was a gracious host.

Perhaps their reputation for dual cultivation set them apart from the other righteous sects, but Qin Jun was presented with all sorts of toys at the slightest of hints. They were brought to him by professional attendants that didn't even blink.

However, none of them would've ever thought in a million years that Qin-shixiong of Peng Lai was bullying and disrespecting his shizun. They could only quietly speculate that maybe he had a mistress he kept secret from Jiang Xianjun etc.

But while such a thing might be looked down upon in any other righteous sect, it wasn't noteworthy to those at He Huan.

After going through another round of 'sharing is caring' and paying a huge price, Jiang Xianjun refused to see his disciples for several days again.

During that time, the progress bar that used to be stuck at 52% began to skyrocket. It would always jump up a little when Jiang Yinghe wasn't looking, almost as if passing the halfway mark meant it was all downhill from here.

A few days later, the He Huan SectMaster succession ceremony proceeded according to plan. All the sects attended to observe. Dressed in flowing

robes, Wang Mengzhou, the disciple of an old friend, stopped in front of Jiang Yinghe and offered him tea, respectfully thanking him as a junior.

Although he was the head of the sect, Wang Mengzhou was still young. Plus his shizun, Tong Guiyu, was good friends with Jiang Yinghe. So even if the other elders had some grievances, they did not dare to say anything in front of Jiang Xianjun.

In accordance with his current position, Jiang Yinghe didn't say much. He only offered a word of advice. "Although you have much potential, the road ahead will be long and arduous."

Wang Mengzhou nodded in response. He noticed that no one lingered by Jiang Xianjun's side, not even that cat. After a moment's consideration, he asked, "The people by senior's side..."

Jiang Yinghe knew what he was trying to ask. He answered preemptively, "My disciples have been rather rebellious lately. A small matter between master and disciples."

It was fine when Wang Mengzhou didn't bring it up, but now all Jiang Yinghe could think about was how enthusiastic He Huan Sect was in giving those 'presents'...

They quickly switched to a more mundane subject, finishing the rest of their conversation without upset. After the ceremony, the Peng Lai congregation remained half a day more to discuss the Dao. As there were inevitably differences between the ideologies of righteous and neutral sects, Jiang Yinghe departed at dusk before some hot headed juniors could get into a fight.

The sky was deeply shrouded in night as the flying carriage took to the air.

Due to his ice and snow foundation, Jiang Yinghe's body temperature was always slightly cool. The winter night chill didn't bother him.

Yet someone lit the incense burner. A warm scent drifted over, the wisp of smoke at the perfect temperature brushing past his knuckles. At the same

time, an inky black snake crawled onto the desk and twisted itself into a pretzel.

Jiang Yinghe looked at the snake and said, "Why is it running around everywhere? The winter chill doesn't bother me, but on a cold night like this, cold-blooded animals might die if they suddenly go into hibernation..."

He looked up halfway through. The sight of Li Huanhan's eyes made his words come to an abrupt halt.

"...Your...eyes..."

Jiang Yinghe froze for a moment, staring at the other person's extremely light-colored left eye in bewilderment. He murmured, "...Your iris lost its colour?"

Li Huanhan's eyes were originally a pure, bright red, like a pair of bloody rubies. But now, the candlelight cast a faint halo on his left eye. The colour had faded to an almost intangible red haze.

"What's an iris?" Li Huanhan didn't understand. He closed the burner's lid and sat down in front of his shizun. "Qin Jun's looks the same."

Jiang Yinghe needed a moment to understand what he meant. He contemplated this. "Your irises have mixed together..."

Under Li Huanhan's gaze, he restrained his 21st century transmigrator knowledge and asked another question, "The fusion rate is now seventy-nine percent. Have you noticed any other changes?"

Li Huanhan pondered for a moment before holding out his hand. The black snake on the table obediently slithered onto his wrist and disappeared into his sleeve. "More frequently now, the Blood Shadow can't distinguish between us."

Jiang Yinghe nodded. He had anticipated this. "Anything else?"

The other person raised his hand and circulated demonic energy. A completely blood red longsword emerged from mid-air. It was Li Huanhan's

Jimie sword. Then, he tightly grasped it and turned to show its other side.

...Wow. Looks like the other side fell into a paint can.

The front side was dyed a pure red that was clearly evil, but the backside was a mixture of red, green and gray, like someone had randomly dumped a bunch of paint together. This truly unique aesthetic reminded Jiang Yinghe of the sword mantle he saw back in Sword Saint Taichu's old residence.

Jiang Yinghe was speechless. He stared at it for a long time before saying, "The post-modern art style makes it almost surreal-looking."

Feeling like something wasn't right, he glanced at the system's fusion progress again. It was another moment before he asked again, "Is this it? Isn't Chang Ye's fusion a bit...too slow?"

Li Huanhan rarely didn't answer him like this.

There must be a story behind his eldest disciple's silence. Jiang Yinghe looked up and met his eyes for several breaths. Finally, Li Huanhan said calmly, "It's not slow at all."

"...En?"

But the other person didn't elaborate. Jiang Yinghe watched him approach, sensing how the aura about him was in constant fluctuation. From the righteous energy of Peng Lai Sect, to the demonic energy that was as sharp as a blade, to the auras of the other two. Then—

A fluffy wolf ear brushed by his cheek, coming to rest on his shoulder.

Jiang Yinghe sat there blankly. A bolt of lightning seemed to strike his mind, making him recall the disguise he had personally put on Li Huanhan back in Wanyao City. His words caught in his throat. He didn't know what to say anymore.

...What in the world is my little disciple fusing with his shixiong??

Jiang Yinghe's blood pressure was climbing as he remembered Tianhou's original form and ruts. Not to mention the backward barbs that damned cat had in two places. There was a long silence before he asked quietly, "What is Jun-er...?"

"A fox."

Jiang Yinghe sighed with utmost relief. He hugged the other party back. "Thank goodness it wasn't some...strange and unacceptable species."

Li Huanhan licked his Adam's apple as soon as he finished speaking. Jiang Yinghe's back tensed. Strangely, he felt like he was in danger right now.

"They're both common devil races," Li Huanhan said faintly, "but they're also Shizun's..."

He paused for a moment, not saying the words "natural enemy". Instead, he stared intently at the only herbivore here.

Jiang Yinghe stiffened for some reason. He let the other person come closer and press their lips together for an intimate kiss. After calming down slightly, he heard Li Huanhan's pensive voice.

"...You smell so good." Li Huanhan buried his face in the crook of his shizun's shoulder, fully embracing the other's clear and cold spiritual breath. He quietly asked, "Can I eat you?"

Jiang Yinghe had many questions about what he meant by 'eat'. He pinched those perked up wolf ears on his head and looked down. "What do you mean by 'eat'? I'm going to neuter all of you."

But his words didn't contain any traces of anger. His eyes shone as bright as the stars from the reflected candlelight, and there was a faint trace of red around his lips where this evil wolf had bitten him. This person, so beautiful he looked like he stepped out of a painting, naturally had none of the intimidation or honour expected of a master.

His slightly reddened lips were sealed again by the other person. Li Huanhan's hands tightened around his waist, letting him sink inch by inch, step by step, into his arms.

—-

After returning to Peng Lai, Xuan Wei Xianjun did not show himself again. He returned straight to Qing Jing Peak.

Inside the White Crane Jade Manor, the reforging of Wangchen was underway. The first smelting was already completed and the metal sealed in the furnace.

The little cat that liked to mess around was nuzzling Jiang Yinghe's hand. It brushed against it this way and that while wrapping its tail around his wrist.

Jiang Yinghe was supported by Qin Jun who was also applying medicine for him. He spared half his divine sense to watch over the fire while petting this tease of a little cat at the same time.

Jiang Yinghe only came back to full awareness when the bite mark on his collarbone stung. He looked down and saw that Qin Jun had paused with a slightly dark expression. His second disciple commented ambiguously, "So he dares to bite here too."

Jiang Yinghe could only remain silent. If Qin Jun showed his newly merged animal state right now, his fox tail would probably be completely puffed out.

The miraculous medicines of the cultivation world were extremely potent. The marks faded away for the most part after a few moments.

Qin Jun exhaled slowly and looked up at his shizun with gray and red eyes. Only the bottom portion of his irises remained a bit muddled.

"And you let him bite there." Qin Jun leaned over and stared at him. "Shizun's bottom line is really unfathomable when he's involved."

Jiang Yinghe coughed lightly a few times. "I was too distracted at that moment to...protest too much."

"Shizun is always angry with me over matters in bed." Qin Jun's words were crisp and clear. "But is Li Huanhan any better? He forgets all restraint when he goes mad."

For some reason, although he did not deliberately show it at all, Jiang Yinghe felt that Qin Jun was a bit aggrieved. He hesitated before speaking, "...I won't get angry with you over things like that anymore..."

"But the worst part is," Qin Jun continued, "Shizun only accedes to me in order to continue blatantly favouring him."

Jiang Yinghe was so wrapped up in this fox's logic that he failed to figure out a way to clear his name before Qin Jun embraced and lightly kissed him.

...Even the way they try to earn favour with me through kissing is becoming the same.

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. In a split second, the kitten that used to be obediently staying by his side also shifted back to human form. His big, fluffy tail pressed against his shizun's waist, clearly stating his desire to not be left out.

After that brief kiss, the cool ointment was applied to the hidden and minor wounds. This continued until the laces of Jiang Yinghe's snow-white robes loosened, looking like they would come apart with the slightest of touches —

Outside the door, the spirit cranes chirped. The doors suddenly opened to reveal a purple-clad female cultivator at the entrance. Her voice carried into the room.

"Jiang-shidi, are you back? I heard from my disciples that you didn't show yourself when you returned to Peng Lai, that Li Huanhan made the rest of the arrangements. Did He Huan Sect mistreat you in any way?"

"...This furnace...are you recasting the Wangchen sword? Forging cold elements in fire...Not bad—"

Yan Caiwei's words came to an abrupt halt.

Her gaze bypassed the sword casting furnace and landed on the table and chairs behind the screen. Once again, her eyes were graced with indescribable images that sent her mind into a flurry of thoughts.

She was dumbstruck for a moment. Swallowing back her previous words, she warmly said, "...Why don't you guys go ahead. I'm not in a hurry, really."

Author's Corner

Yan-shijie: There's only three...ghosts here. I want to order more (starry eyes)

HeHe: ...How come it's always you. Are you the VIP on-scene experience scroll the author used a back door to arrange?

OceanofPDF.com

CH83 - WANT TO TEST IT OUT? (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The black piece was set down on the board.

Since they were interrupted while doing that, things naturally couldn't so easily resume. Ointment was applied to the few marks that were on Jiang Yinghe.

He tightened his collar, looking at the chessboard and thinking about his next move while listening to Yan Caiwei ask him about the journey.

Jiang Yinghe offered a brief explanation of the key points to put Yan Caiwei's mind at ease.

When he grew distracted after glancing at the fire in the sword casting furnace, Yan Caiwei spoke up, "I see. That's a relief."

She nodded. "I also came to tell you something... Ever since you returned to Peng Lai, we have received many messages from the disciples outside, about the terrain changing and the amount of spiritual energy increasing in many dangerous areas.

Yan Caiwei pressed a jade slip sent back to the Sect on the chessboard and pushed it to Jiang Yinghe.

Jiang Yinghe touched it and sent his divine sense within, reading the many reports on the phenomenon taking place.

"Our investigation revealed that most of these places were formed during the Dark Ages and have changed very little in the past ten thousand years.

Yan Caiwei was halfway through her sentence when she turned to look at the other person.

"Does Shidi think that this matter has a connection with your Dao Ancestor?"

There was no doubt that the two were related. After all, those places came to be because of the instability in Li Junye's Dao heart and the weakening of his Dao seed. Now that his split souls were purified and merging together, these changes in the landscape of the human realm must have something to do with him.

But these changes seemed to generally be for the better.

"Yes, I believe it is because of him." Jiang Yinghe replied as he sealed off his opponent's path with a move. He retrieved the pieces he had eliminated. "Shijie needn't worry. This is a good thing."

Yan Caiwei said, "I'm not worried with you around...By the way, how is the recasting of Wangchen going?"

She looked up and swept her divine sense over the sword casting furnace. She saw the crystal clear sword sealed within was completely unaffected by the molten slag it rested on. It even emitted a slight chill into its surroundings.

Without Jiang Yinghe having to say anything, she could sense that this sword was of extraordinary quality. She sighed, "Ever since you returned with Wuchen, Qing Jing Peak has been somewhat colder. Enough so to affect even cultivators. But now, this sword has been refined to a higher quality, learning to conceal its sharpness and temperature."

Only after she got through a round of compliments and all the business matters did Yan Caiwei inquire in a roundabout fashion, "...What's going on with the eyes of Demon Lord Li and Patriarch Qin?"

Jiang Yinghe paused in setting down his next piece. "The fusion has progressed to the point where their eyes have changed colour."

He paused before asking, "Doesn't Shijie think...their new pupils look, well, like those of beasts?"

Yan Caiwei froze for a moment, not sure where Jiang-shidi was going with this.

"...Like a Persian cat." Jiang Yinghe slaughtered a large number of his opponent's pieces. He stopped once he sensed Yan Caiwei's distracted state and said with a serious expression, "The type that loves to bite."

Yan Caiwei glanced at the faint teeth marks just visible above her opponent's collar before looking down at the game whose outcome was basically decided. She wasn't sure if Jiang Yinghe was being literal or if he was hinting at the various 'secret scenes with the Xianjun' she had stumbled upon.

"I lost." Yan Caiwei smoothly conceded defeat, "Only Zhangmen-shixiong is your match. The rest of us pale in comparison."

She stood up and fiddled with the whisk in her arms for a bit, kind of regretful that she hadn't been able to see more of the 'scene'. But out of consideration for her shidi, she spoke no more of it as she left.

Jiang Yinghe put away the chess pieces. Since it wasn't time to stoke the fire of the sword casting furnace yet, he pulled out the Observation Journal from the bookshelf again and flipped to where he had stopped before. There were a few more pages added thanks to the recent fusion progress.

"...His primordial spirit was already wavering during our discussion."

"Many dangerous areas with thin spiritual energy are beginning to appear in the mortal realm. But what difference does it make? All of it is just one giant purgatory headed towards destruction anyways. So what if it's degraded a touch more."

"In order to meet me again after he splits his soul, he's made many deductions to plan out the details. I joked that perhaps he would find something better to do than stick to me after reincarnation."

"But Li Junye was adamant that could never happen. He was only afraid that I wouldn't want him anymore."

"How could that be...I specifically designed the guidance from the past with my long-held feelings in mind. I would never be unable to recognize you."

Jiang Yinghe glanced at the system thoughtfully. He pondered over this cautious and insecure Dao Ancestor from the text. Didn't Qin Jun give him a similar impression at first?

The fusion system was silent. As if silence was enough to safeguard its secrets.

Jiang Yinghe turned the page. He saw that the first few lines had been scribbled out. Then came the following:

"Everything has been set. He will soon release the second and third split souls with delays in the time they regain consciousness so that they will appear at different times."

"My back is sore after we discussed it all night. The little manservant here told me that there's a rumour floating around outside about me having an affair with the Dao Ancestor. It took me quite a bit of alternative phrasing to tell him that was no rumour."

"A while ago, when that person went mad and wanted to lock me up in a small, dark room, there were already rumours out there that this Sword Saint had a wife. That person actually said, with a straight face, that it was him,and even unilaterally announced that he was married to me... Sigh..."

"I still get angry every time I'm reminded of the small, dark room. No, I have to leave a note for my future reincarnation."

Jiang Yinghe: "..."

...As expected of myself.

Was the small, dark room skill inherited from this person? Jiang Yinghe sighed as he recalled the level of this man's small, dark room skill.

With the Observation Journal gradually setting the scene, the hazy images in Jiang Yinghe's mind began to sharpen. He could now vaguely recall that time in the distant past.

He recalled the gentle moon at night, the flickering flame of a candle gradually parting the darkness, the other person holding his hand.

But there was also an ice cold chain linking their wrists together. As though limiting his movements could keep Jiang Yinghe by his side forever.

That person was past the point of no return. He was sometimes as gentle as ever, sometimes completely insane. But when he held Jiang Yinghe in his arms, he was afraid to even lean over for a soft kiss for fear of imposing his own desires on his love.

Their relationship was slightly strained then, because all Jiang Yinghe could think about was how illegal everything would be in his old world. He felt like the prosecutor's office back home would send this case straight to trial if he reported it. Even if he and Li Junye shared a genuine friendship before.

It was only when the situation deteriorated further that Li Junye cut the shackles holding the Crane Immortal captive.

On a night when the moon was clear and the stars were dim...

The chains that once held him broke with a crisp sound.

He saw the volcanoes erupting, the four seas becoming turbulent, the Heavens and Earth crying out in lament.

He watched the clear moonlight become dim and all the stars fall from the sky.

He watched Li Junye's fingertip both spiritually and physically begin to fester and bleed after he cut the shackles.

The droplets of blood landed on the clouds above the Endless Sky Watchtower.

Just when he thought that the Crane Immortal would fly away, the other person instead took his wounded finger and slowly dabbed it dry. Looking down and speaking faintly, he said, "I'm not doing this to save the world or to save you. I'm doing this for myself."

He stayed and said to this seemingly omnipotent Dao Ancestor:

"I will teach you everything you do not know."

I will teach you how to face love, life, death and desire.

I will teach you...how to face me.

—-

These memories were not very clear but Jiang Yinghe got the general gist.

As the sun rose, snow fell once again on Qing Jing Peak as the presence of deep winter intensified. Inside where there was little insulation, only a single stove was lit. But it was all cultivators needed to stave off the cold.

Jiang Yinghe dreamt of his past on Earth. He slept deeper than usual, leading to him waking up a little late the next morning. When he was about to get up and check on the sword casting furnace, someone suddenly held his hand.

Both the manner and temperature of the other was very familiar. Jiang Yinghe subconsciously returned the grasp and interlinked their fingers. It was only when he turned to look that he was stunned.

"...You–"

The moment their eyes met, the fusion progress bar that had been stuck at seventy-nine suddenly broke through to eighty percent. There was only a small stretch left to go.

The silent system seemed rather excited as well, since the border around the progress bar turned pink.

The man in front of him had one pure gray and one pure red eye. A small black snake lay with its head hanging out of his collar, so natural it seemed a part of him. Apart from that, his face was...

It was like someone had bribed the person sculpting it a lot of money.

Just the half of Chang Ye's face that he revealed was enough to leave people in a trance. After the three of them fused, their appearance was even more devastating than Chang Ye's, but in a different way. At least Chang Ye's beauty was within the realm of mortal possibility. This person's beauty was so overwhelming that it verged on dangerous and incomprehensible.

Jiang Yinghe choked. All he could do was stare until the other person pulled him close and whispered into his ear like always.

"Can Shizun still distinguish between us now?"

Jiang Yinghe was securely in his arms. He could tell right away who this was and softly called out, "...Jun-er?"

"En." Qin Jun kissed him, satisfied. "Our consciousnesses haven't fully merged yet. The other two are still arguing in my head."

Jiang Yinghe was silent for a beat. He looked at him. "...What are they talking about?"

Qin Jun stared at him for a moment before slowly smiling. "They're afraid you won't be able to tell us apart."

"How could that be." Jiang Yinghe subconsciously retorted, "Of course I would be able to tell you apart. A single glance is all I need."

"Chang Ye said," Qin Jun squeezed his finger, "there's no way Shizun would be able to tell the difference during dual cultivation."

Jiang Yinghe: "...Why does it have to be so specific."

What was this little disciple of his thinking all day? How could he so casually twist the conversation to that?

"Because Shizun couldn't tell the difference before." Qin Jun said, "When you start crying after you can't take it anymore, you always call out the wrong name."

He temporarily took control to experience this fused body. He could feel something that seemed like the Dao seed slowly revive within. There were also some memories belonging to the 'ex-wife' awakening as well.

Qin Jun only glanced at them. He didn't know what the other two were discussing inside. Instead, he leaned over for another kiss. He whispered, "Do you want to test it out?"

"...Test what out?" His shizun asked when he already knew the answer. There was some subtle tension in the way he held his hand.

Qin Jun kissed the corner of his lips and murmured, "Like Shizun said, let's see if you can tell us apart at a glance...in bed."

Author's Corner

Before the fusion, the three of them checked the memories of the 'ex-wife': Shizun was so good to him! We're so jealous!

After the fusion, the Dao Ancestor reviewed the memories of the split souls: The Crane Immortal was so good to them! I'm so jealous!!!

HeHe: ...

It's almost over~

Rain

Yeah, things are wrapping up. There's only two chapters and an extra to go.

Sahl

I haz a sads.

OceanofPDF.com

CH84 - LIFELINE (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

After the three of them fused physically, their memories gradually returned as well.

Jiang Yinghe wasn't sure exactly what they 'saw', but he was almost overwhelmed by the strong scent of vinegar they were giving off.

He could still tell them apart at first as soon as they opened their mouths. But as this bastard tossed and turned him around while grumbling into his ear about how good he was to his 'ex-wife'...

...Is there really a need to be so jealous of yourself?

Jiang Yinghe even lost track of what he was saying near the end. All he could remember was Li Huanhan pinning his wrist against the bed when it was his turn to take control. He didn't say a word even as he ramped up the intensity.

Even if Jiang Yinghe didn't listen to what he was saying, he could tell what Li Huanhan meant through his actions, and his entire body was going limp. This living vinegar jar even softly asked him a question when he raised his head to let him kiss him.

"...Why aren't you saying anything...?... You..."

Jiang Yinghe wanted him to go slower, but he didn't have the energy to even speak. He murmured incoherently, the words trailing off into confusion.

Li Huanhan lowered his head and kissed the reddened corners of his eyes, quietly demanding, "Say my name."

"...Huan, Huanhan—"

Jiang Yinghe looked up at him, his dark, inky eyes wet with tears. His appearance made others only want to ravish him more.

It took him a long time to barely adjust to Li Huanhan's rhythm, but then a fluffy tail encircled his waist. When Jiang Yinghe looked up again, it was his little disciple behind that face, biting down on his neck.

He didn't use a lot of force, but those teeth still easily branded the spot a slight red. This little bastard licking there a few times didn't help matters at all.

Jiang Yinghe was already exhausted. He could only sink into the other's arms and let those soft cat ears nuzzle him. Then he heard Chang Ye ask petulantly, "Is Shizun not feeling well? Why aren't you saying anything? Does Shizun prefer them after all...Shizun, your body is burning up..."

"...Shut up."

Jiang Yinghe's head couldn't keep up with his incessant chatter. He pressed himself against Chang Ye's shoulder and reprimanded him. But that only served to excite this bastard. Not only was he jealous of his past incarnation, he was also jealous of the other two.

And after they fused, the other two whelps seemed to be working together to torment him. Jiang Yinghe originally thought that he would be able to handle them after the fusion...

That was clearly not the case.

After fooling around for an entire night, Jiang Yinghe was too spent to pay attention to the soaring progress bar. At some point he fell asleep.

When he opened his eyes again, it was past when he usually woke up. Sunlight shone into the White Crane Jade Manor.

His mind went blank for a long time as he slowly recalled what happened last night.

Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath and decided to take the high road, chanting to himself, "I'm not angry" as he changed his clothes.

It seemed to work until a familiar arm circled around his waist and took him into another's embrace.

"You're awake?" The other man murmured quietly, "Does your waist hurt?"

...Oh, so you were aware?

Jiang Yinghe straight up wanted to kick him to the ground. Alas, he couldn't do so because of how securely the other person held him. He could only shoot him a blank look and say, "You unfilial disciple. Let go and scram."

Qin Jun nodded like he accepted his fault in the matter, but he didn't let go. Instead, he began to massage Jiang Yinghe's lower waist, bending down to kiss him as well. "Chang Ye made you cry yesterday."

"...You did too."

"That's different. He doesn't know how to control his strength." Qin Jun replied, "It's more comfortable with me, right?"

Before Jiang Yinghe could answer, the other two were already sarcastically snapping at Qin Jun in their mind—how wicked he was to drag Shizun into this.

Jiang Yinghe gave him a look. He didn't want to be truthful, so he said nothing at all. He slowly hugged Qin Jun back for a moment before quietly whispering, "...My back hurts. And my legs too."

"Anywhere else?"

"..."

Would this guy suffocate if he didn't keep some of those infuriating thoughts to himself??

—-

Spring took the place of winter.

The snow on Qing Jing Peak gradually melted away as the spirit cranes wandered around.

When the fusion degree was in its final stages, the snow sword inside the sword casting furnace was successfully made.

Jiang Yinghe took out Wangchen when the fire inside the furnace subsided.

Wangchen's body was crystal clear and of a neutral temperature. All its sharp edges had been gradually restrained as well. But it still didn't react to Jiang Yinghe's touch like it should.

Jiang Yinghe was not surprised. He brushed a thumb across the blade as he glanced at the system that had been maintaining the progress bar in a corner of his vision.

After a few moments of silence, the system left his divine soul and poured into the body of Wangchen, becoming the sword spirit once more.

At the same time, an additional mark appeared on the back of the snow sword. A display of the final percentages of the progress bar, showing the system's stubbornness.

...As expected, it was the sword spirit. Everything had been arranged so that nothing else could take its place.

The snow sword suddenly shone brightly. A simple design emerged above the blade. A faint plum fragrance emanated from within as Wangchen merged with its original sword pendant.

Jiang Yinghe examined the sword for a moment before raising a hand to touch its surface. As soon as his fingertips came into contact with the completed Wangchen, the haze across his memories lifted.

Everything became clear.

Wangchen nestled obediently against him, as if it hadn't been masquerading as a system all this time.

Jiang Yinghe tapped the back of the sword with a finger, saying lightly, "You really held back, didn't you? Didn't tell me a thing."

A tremor ran through the snow sword. Its voice was different from the mechanical one of the system. It almost sounded aggrieved, "Master, you taught me to act that way. You said that I had to be as cruel and ruthless as a machine and as cold and unfathomable as the ultimate boss."

Jiang Yinghe choked on his words as he recalled that exact phrase from his now clear memories. He coughed lightly. "...It must've been hard on you."

The sword spirit immediately brightened after receiving his understanding. It obediently stayed inside Wangchen as Jiang Yinghe recalled the sword into his foundation.

It might just be his imagination, but the cold and ethereal aura around his body seemed to intensify after he recalled the snow sword. Even the spirit crane at the door became more clingy, nuzzling his sleeve and demanding to be petted.

After Jiang Yinghe settled the matter of reforging the snow sword, he went to Peng Lai's main palace to give a lecture, as Yan-shijie had requested.

Since their fusion, whether it was the Tian Mo School, the Nether Realm or the Devil tribes, all of those factions were attended to simultaneously by using the doppelganger technique. The main body remained at Peng Lai to wreak havoc on his shizun.

As the Dao seed recovered and the fusion progressed, that person's cultivation returned as well, becoming even more unfathomable. Jiang Yinghe too was making rapid progress since his bottleneck had been resolved.

With Jiang Yinghe's status, it wasn't uncommon for him to give lectures. For this reason, almost everyone in Peng Lai was present. Some of the

younger generation were even more eager and full of respect than their seniors.

On the tall platform, Jiang Yinghe spoke from the very beginning of the Dao heart. His words were simple and concise, befitting his status as a famous teacher. Just as this famous teacher finally felt like he actually taught something for once, he suddenly noticed a certain white-robed youth in attendance, as well as the tiger by his side.

Little Yun-shidi came out of seclusion?

Yun Buxiu had been in seclusion for many years in order to settle his heart. There was a high chance that he hadn't even informed Yan-shijie of his sudden reappearance.

The white-robed youth listened attentively to the lecture. He winked at his Jiang-shixiong. The tiger accompanying him napped at his feet, not acting like a carnivore should at all.

But that's to be expected...After all, even the Devil King never acted like a carnivore either.

Jiang Yinghe put those thoughts aside and continued his lesson.

When he finished, the disciples present all rose, and saluted half of what they would give their own teacher to show their respect.

Jiang Yinghe nodded slightly and rose to leave. Just after he stepped out of the Peng Lai main palace, he saw an absolutely adorable little, white cat sitting on the road. It had one red and one gray eye. The tufts atop its ears twitched twice.

Jiang Yinghe knew who it was, so he deliberately pretended not to see him and walked straight past.

How could this little kitty give up so easily? It followed Jiang Yinghe on its short legs, circling around and lying down in front of him. Its big, fluffy tail hooked around his leg alluringly.

Jiang Yinghe lowered his head to give him a look. When he saw the sincere desire for hugs and kisses in the little kitty's eyes, he stopped teasing him and picked him up.

It was so soft and fluffy that it was very pleasant to touch.

Jiang Yinghe contentedly stroked it a few times. But before he could knead the tail that exposed him as a cat lover, the little kitty in his arms suddenly changed form. The situation immediately reversed as he was swept into another's arms.

The kitty he had been petting was nowhere to be seen. There was only his traitorous disciple here now.

Before Jiang Yinghe could speak, he was silenced with a tender kiss. He heard the other person quietly ask, "Is this how he seduced you?"

...Seduced???

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback. He needed to take out Wangchen to check the progress bar now, so he hadn't paid it much mind until now.

...Actually, he couldn't tell who this was?

"That cat." The other person's tone carried a bit of resignation due to the unsuccessful bid for favor. "He seduced my cultivation partner this way."

Without waiting for Jiang Yinghe's answer, the other person tightened his grip on his waist and pulled him close again. Prying his lips apart, they exchanged a tender and lingering kiss.

Jiang Yinghe recalled after the first kiss that they were still in public. He whispered, "What are you acting crazy for? Wait until we get back...Wu..."

This guy didn't listen either. How familiar.

It was quite some time before Jiang Yinghe could catch his breath. With the corners of his eyes reddened, he was about to scold the other person when he heard a quiet and gentle call of 'Crane Immortal'.

He paused and looked up, staring at the other person for a long time before softly replying, "...You've returned."

"En." Li Junye hugged him closer and he reviewed the memories of his split souls. He was drowning in vinegar, but he couldn't say it outright, let alone show how jealous he was of that little kitty. He could only kiss Jiang Yinghe gently and whisper, "I want to embrace you."

When Jiang Yinghe heard his voice, he felt himself relax all of a sudden. He even almost said yes without thinking but luckily managed to stop in time. He glanced around, wondering when someone would come over.

...

"You...Let's go back first."

The secretly jealous Dao Ancestor refused. A bizarre sense of paranoia seemed to radiate from his being as he looked straight into Jiang Yinghe's eyes. "You did it with them in plenty of places..."

"They're a part of you." Jiang Yinghe lost his temper and grabbed him by the collar. "Jealous of even this...did water get into that head of yours? Behave yourself or I'll draw up the divorce papers..."

Jiang Yinghe's mouth was sealed by him, his lips bitten until they swelled. Only after he stopped saying these words did Li Junye reluctantly return to normal. He quietly relented, "I won't make a scene anymore, so don't say such things. Even a single sentence feels like a death sentence to me."

The Crane Immortal was his lifeline. Any mention of parting was one mention too much.

Author's Corner

Dao Ancestor: Aren't I your most beloved person?? Why aren't you saying anything—

HeHe: QAQ I was kissed until I couldn't breathe so how could I say anything?!

OceanofPDF.com

CH85 - HIS WHITE CRANE FLEW BACK TO THE CLOUDS (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

The candlelight was bright.

Jiang Yinghe felt like he had been tormented enough by him these days. He grew tired as soon as the sun went down and wanted to do nothing more than sleep the night away. He wasn't interested in giving that guy a single chance.

But the other person had different ideas. Li Junye had gone through the memories of his split souls over the past few days, before imprinting them into his divine soul. Even though he knew that they came from him, that they represented parts of himself, he still couldn't help feeling jealous.

As the candle was rekindled, the heart of the flame flickered, illuminating the room much brighter than before.

Jiang Yinghe knew he was coming, but he really was too tired lately to deal with him. Thus, Jiang Yinghe remained silent even when he sensed him rekindling the candle.

Then Li Junye's hand reached under the blanket and gently clasped his fingers.

Jiang Yinghe closed his eyes and drew back his hand silently.

But the other person persisted, chasing down his hand and holding it even tighter.

A familiar voice drifted to his ears.

"...Shizun?"

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback by this voice. When he looked up, his lips were immediately sealed by another pair. He was fiercely kissed before being bitten all the way down to his neck. The other person's tone abruptly darkened.

"Do you like him more?"

It was Li Huanhan's voice just now, almost exactly as he had sounded before. However, there were still the slightest of differences.

Jiang Yinghe frowned at his biting frenzy. His fingers brushed past Li Junye's hair to the back of his neck. This bastard's words made him angry again. "They're all you, the parts of your divine soul that you personally split and made arrangements for. Why are you instead getting more and more restless when your Dao heart has stabilized and the Dao seed has revived..?"

His words trailed off as he turned and met the other's gaze.

As they looked into each other's eyes, all their thoughts of the past few years suddenly spread and intertwined like threads. And every memory from this life gradually melded and spread into the other person's consciousness.

Li Junye's hand clutched at his sleeve before reaching in. He interlocked all ten fingers with Jiang Yinghe.

"...I was afraid you wouldn't want me to come back anymore."

Jiang Yinghe was caught off guard. He didn't know what he was on about.

"I was afraid that you would think I wasn't good enough."

This person was the Dao Ancestor who brought this entire world into existence, its one and only creator. Every move of his had the potential to affect the countless lifeforms living here.

He was the one closest to being God.

But this person had fallen long ago, from the clouds above the Endless Sky Watchtower to the side of a lone crane who had strayed from the flock.

He was afraid that the crane wouldn't like the air above the clouds.

He was afraid that the crane would reject him.

His words softened Jiang Yinghe's heart. He let him hold his hand and whispered, "How could you not be good enough? There is no one greater in my heart."

Jiang Yinghe leaned over and took the initiative to kiss this nervous wreck of a cultivation partner. He gazed into the other's heterochromatic eyes as he continued, "...Welcome back. Can't you see I've obviously been waiting for you for a long time?"

The candle's flame flickered slightly as a refreshing night breeze blew in through the open windows of the White Crane Jade Manor. The wisps of smoke melded into the subtle fragrance lingering in the room.

Every word Jiang Yinghe said was truthful. He had indeed waited a long time. His disappointment and warmth swirled together into a concoction reserved only for the other party. Since he loved every part of Li Junye, he loved the whole of him as well, including the moments of jealousy that left him speechless.

That was, until his dream became a reality.

Jiang Yinghe stared at this guy who was unbuttoning his shirt while asking, "How many people would you like?"

His head was buzzing.

...Isn't, isn't just one possible? Don't you think you're going overboard with these questions? Why are you so insistent on proving yourself to me on this aspect??

Jiang Yinghe didn't even know how to begin to respond. He felt very complicated after seeing the look in those black and red eyes that seemed to say, 'I'll do anything that the Crane Immortal likes'.

...Please stop, you've done enough...

Jiang Yinghe's eyebrow twitched. He massaged them and sighed,"...You don't have to...I actually..."

Before he could finish, he felt a plush tail wrap around his waist. Jiang Yinghe froze for a moment as soft, fluffy cat ears assaulted him. A rich, luscious fragrance filled his arms.

"Ye-er..." Jiang Yinghe only managed to react after his waist had been encircled. So Li Junye thought that he would like the part that knew how to act spoiled the most.

"Shizun." Chang Ye scooted over to lick the corner of his lips. He spoke directly on behalf of the main body. "Do it with just Ye-er, okay?"

Jiang Yinghe covered his hand with his own. He asked, exasperated, "So he let you out alone. How does it feel?"

"About the same as always." Chang Ye stared at him. "Seems like the other two will wake up as well, but there's only one body still."

When Jiang Yinghe heard that the other two would also wake up, he had a bad premonition about things. Then he heard his little disciple say with the utmost seriousness, "They're clamouring for us to do a group exercise together..."

"..."

—-

After experiencing his cultivation partner asking him 'how many people he wanted' and his disciple's 'group exercise', Jiang Yinghe felt a marked increase in his resilience...especially that kind.

Li Junye's unsettled state of mind originated from tens of thousands of years of separation. It was not a wound that could be healed immediately.

Additionally, he could freely split his divine soul now that his Dao seed had completely recovered. He could literally argue with himself.

For example, one day Jiang Yinghe returned from a visit to Lan Ruo Temple and saw that Qing Jing Peak's neighbouring peak had been cut off again. Confused, he had to ask around before a messenger disciple told him, "Li-shixiong and Qin-shixiong were exchanging pointers again."

...Exchanging...pointers.

Jiang Yinghe took a deep breath. He felt like Li Junye's mental state really needed some serious work done. Ever since their first meeting prior to his reincarnation, this person had been only wearing a mask of sanity.

Jiang Yinghe had ignored him all day that day. As a result, just before bed that night, a small heterochromatic kitten pounced in his lap and acted all cute and spoiled. It broke through his feigned barrier of anger with ease.

But he only heard Li Junye's quiet apology after the kitten turned into a man and made him cry in bed.

"I wanted to make you like me more, even just a little bit." He said.

"It was you that I fell for in the first place." He closed his eyes and allowed the other to kiss away the tear stains on his face. His voice was husky but warm. "How must I say it for you to understand?"

The other person held him close.

A kiss forever sealed the deep affection in the words.

The Crane Immortal was his most important person. At this moment, his beloved was a warm presence, a perfect fit in his arms. With the utmost tenderness, he whispered to him that his love and affection were all for one person.

Him.

Just like snowflakes, every love was unique. There would never be another like this.

—-

One hundred and seventy-five years later, the Peng Lai Sect Master, Zhou Zhengping, crossed into the Hollowed Cave stage. The various sects came to offer their congratulations.

Then ten years later, Abbot Chan Qing of Lan Ruo Temple passed away. He left his artifacts to Kong Jing, who succeeded him as Abbot and continued to maintain friendly relations with the Devil tribes. Through Kong Jing Chanshi's intervention, Devil Baron Jiuying was able to retrieve the half of his devil core at Peng Lai. He subsequently converted to Buddhism and became a monk.

In another fifty years, He Huan Sect Master Wang Mengzhou entered seclusion, leaving the sect elders to manage all affairs. That same year, Yao Wang Valley's Huai Qing Zhenren took in a child healer as his disciple.

As the years went by, Qing Jing Peak had become even more sparsely populated. The spirit cranes guarding the door had long since achieved human form. In the guise of youths, they skillfully took care of the peak's affairs.

Inside the White Crane Jade Manor, a youth in white robes changed out the lampshade while speaking to his playmate, "The Sword Immortal and Dao Ancestor went on vacation again. I wonder if the other worlds out there are interesting."

His bored playmate was seated, organizing the news coming back from the Nether Realm and adding them to the ever growing mountains of reports neglected by the Lord Dao Ancestor. "Maybe not. They're only visiting that place because it's Master's homeland and he wanted to research something there. What was it again...a mobile phone?"

The white crane girl who was dusting the bookshelf turned with brightly shining eyes. "Yes, yes, yes! I heard Master tell Lord Dao Ancestor about it before."

They chatted for a while about all the strange things Jiang Yinghe had brought back, like crayfish hot pot, to the things he was working on next, like phones, computers and the internet. Although none of them really understood the specifics of technology, that didn't stop them from having fun discussing it. They eagerly speculated on what new and exotic products their master would bring back this time.

Meanwhile, in another world—

Jiang Yinghe lifted a hand to straighten out any wayward locks of his long hair. Then he took his cultivation partner's hand and graciously let the young girl passing by take a couple of pictures.

He was dressed in snow-white cultivator robes made from high quality fabrics and adorned with exquisite embroidery. His entire figure radiated wealth, not to mention his beauty that transcended monetary description. Everyone he passed couldn't help but stare.

It was truly a beautiful sight at the anime convention, especially since there were two peerless beauties side by side.

Ever since Li Junye had completely regained his cultivation, the two of them had started working on orienting the world they inhabited with respect to other ones. Eventually they were able to return to Earth, so Jiang Yinghe could accomplish the things on his wish list—the last few pages of the 'Observation Journal' were all filled with things he still wanted to do, a wish list of sorts.

Just as Jiang Yinghe was posing as casually as can be with Ultraman for a picture, the Lord Dao Ancestor staying silently by his side suddenly gripped his hand tighter.

"What's wrong?" Jiang Yinghe turned to look at his cultivation partner.

"Some of them are staring." Li Junye frowned. "Their gazes are too..."

"Too intense?" Jiang Yinghe moved closer and gave him a look. "If only you had half of your current sincerity and attitude before, then things wouldn't have to have been so convoluted. Do you see how the people of this world all have the courage to pursue others? Why do you still worry about me leaving or moving on, even after I've reassured you so many times?"

The other party remained silent. He just lowered his head to place a gentle kiss on the corner of Jiang Yinghe's lips.

Jiang Yinghe was a little embarrassed by all the clicking of camera shutters around them that followed. He gently tapped the back of Li Junye's hand and said, "Don't be like this."

"...Why not?"

Jiang Yinghe thought for a moment and jokingly said, "This might make it on the news or become a Weibo headline."

"So?"

Jiang Yinghe was stumped by his retort. He thought about the extreme difference in the flow of time between the two worlds, and how coming here occasionally didn't seem to have any significant impact.

He lifted a finger as if to say something, only to eventually relent.

Jiang Yinghe turned to hold the other person, whispering, "...You're right. It doesn't matter. Kiss me if you want."

Their breaths slowly intermingled.

When this person came close to him, their messy past and the bustling place in their present seemed to fade away, leaving only the sensation of softly touching lips and his unparalleled warmth.

Jiang Yinghe was gradually held tighter and tighter by him.

He heard a quiet call by his ear. It merged with the countless memories of their past and all that they had experienced throughout the course of this story.

Until finally, it changed back to the one in his memories.

"Crane Immortal..."

His white crane flew back to the clouds.

(Main story end)

Author's Corner

Ah! I've finished writing! It's so nice to have the plot pretty much all wrapped up.

HeHe really is an exceptionally good person, and so is the Dao Ancestor.

I'll write an extra to show what happens with Tong Guiyu's relationship. Then I'll happily end things there. Little angels that have read to this point, please give this story five stars! The next story I'll be working on is called 'The Sickly Beauty in My Heart'. Please bookmark it if you're interested~

Rain

I'm so glad that HeHe and the Dao Ancestor got their happy ending. Our three disciples seem to still be in there too (thank goodness I was worried about that).

Still, it was kind of hard working on this chapter because I just didn't want this story to end, you know? XD

Anyways, thank you guys for coming along on this journey with Sahl and I.

Thank you for reading!

Sahl

One final chapter to go. To those who've joined us on this journey, and those who'll binge read now it's complete – I really hope you fall in love with this story as much as Rain and I have. In fact, we enjoyed working together so much, we started a new project, to help ease the hole left behind by our Peerless Immortal and his disciples. Thank you for reading and commenting and we'll see you one last time next week with the extra.

OceanofPDF.com

CH86 - TONG GUIYU X CHOU YONGZHOU (Draft)

Editor: Sahloknir

"He taught me to turn back from the sea of suffering. He made me realize the impermanence of marriage."

Chou Yongzhou said these sentences lightly. He remained warm and polite, the righteous gentleman known by all.

But his reputation came into question hundreds of years ago. His past affairs with Hun Yuan Xianjun became an example at failing, despite his best intentions. Everyone had an opinion on his ambiguous relationship with Tong Xianjun, but they didn't dare to directly criticise a Xianjun of the Hollowed Cave stage.

The scattered clouds around the Endless Sky Watchtower concealed it from view.

Jiang Yinghe had slightly rolled up his sleeves in order to serve tea. Then he glanced at the young child beside Huai Qing Zhenren.

Although the boy was not very old, vestiges of his original remarkable handsomeness could be seen in his features. He looked somewhat ignorant, but his eyes darted about faster than anyone. He seemed like an enigma, one that might come up with weird, yet brilliant ideas at any time.

Jiang Yinghe looked at him for a moment before smiling. "I haven't seen him like this before. It's good for him to remain by your side, but why haven't you awakened his memories yet?"

Chou Yongzhou used both hands to accept the teacup from the Sword Immortal. His eyes lowered momentarily in thought. "In this world, love is often born through interaction. Raising him is enough for now. As for the future..."

"Both of you have such a strange way of thinking." Jiang Yinghe seemed to sense something and glanced behind him. He took the heterochromatic white cat coming over into his arms before continuing, "He refused to agree, because his Dao heart didn't let him and because he didn't want to tarnish your reputation. And you refuse to awaken his memories because you fear his rejection. Why are neither of you willing to give things a shot?"

As he spoke, he flicked the little white cat on the forehead, as if to reprimand him for being so insecure all the time as well.

"To Hun Yuan Xianjun, I am but an obstacle on his cultivation journey." Chou Yongzhou looked down, the motion revealing his slender, pale neckline. His clothes were simple and thin, a light green outer cloak encasing a snow white shirt embroidered with bamboo. At the moment, his hands were lightly clenching at his sleeves.

"He may not..."

Chou Yongzhou couldn't continue.

The boy beside him seemed to sense his distress. He stared at him intently before reaching out and giving a small tug on Huai Qing Zhenren's fingers.

Jiang Yinghe rarely saw Tong Guiyu like this. Even in his youth, this person had always been flamboyant and capricious. He mulled over this gesture before replying, "In that case, you and I should make a bet."

Chou Yongzhou said, "Please speak, Sword Immortal."

"If it is really as you say, that he may not return your feelings in the future, when I reawaken his memories, I will send him back to He Huan Sect and have Wang Mengzhou explain everything to him.

...But if he still loves you when he grows up," Jiang Yinghe paused a beat, "I will be the witness at your marriage ceremony."

Chou Yongzhou was silent for a long time before nodding quietly and rising to his feet. "...As you wish."

—-

The clouds and mist shrouded all.

This was always the case at the Endless Sky Watchtower. Mist perpetually surrounded this remote and desolate location. Only a few knew that above it was the palace residence of the Dao Ancestor.

In reality, however, the Dao Ancestor was often not here but at Qing Jing Peak of the Peng Lai Sect.

After Chou Yongzhou left, he took the reincarnated Little Yu back to Yao Wang Valley. Since he was a long time member of the Sect, the few opposed to his decision eventually settled down. Not everyone was so concerned about past affairs.

Only he and Wang Mengzhou reminisced about before.

That junior was very bright and mature for his age. He didn't forcefully take the child away, instead giving his sincere blessings. Thus, Chou Yongzhou was able to smoothly raise little Tong Guiyu by his side. He instructed the child in cultivation arts, techniques and how to build his foundation, but Tong Guiyu always had the final say about what he learned.

Yao Wang Valley often refined pills and medicines. The faintly bitter fragrance of herbs that constantly surrounded them could be detected on Chou Yongzhou's body.

Little Tong Guiyu sat on a futon, frowning and squinting at each recipe like they were written in some heavenly cipher. When his mind grew jumbled, he would tumble into Huai Qing Zhenren's lap and ask for guidance.

The time seemed to pass both fast and slow simultaneously.

Blinding daylight shone down on this land. Sometimes, Chou Yongzhou wished that this moment would last forever so that he could stop worrying over their impending separation, like he had for so many years.

Little Tong Guiyu gradually grew older, until he couldn't tumble into Huai Qing Zhenren's lap whenever he wanted. When he was in his teens, he was the splitting image of his past self—a dashing youth.

Clad in pink, with peach blossom eyes, and so beautiful that his gender became ambiguous...

Sly like a fox, but still brimming with the eagerness of youth...

Chou Yongzhou had never seen this side of Tong Guiyu before.

The first time he saw Hun Yuan Xianjun was at the Sword Conference. Then, the man was surrounded by countless pets, his eyes filled with cynicism and frivolous banter. He barely glanced at the young heroes below.

But he casually untied his cloak and draped it over those unnamed pet furnaces of the He Huan Sect. Many in He Huan considered the furnaces little more than cultivation tools. Only Hun Yuan Xianjun treated them like people.

Chou Yongzhou should not have gotten close to him.

In the eyes of many, Huai Qing Zhenren was best described as the clear wind blowing under a bright moon, while Tong Guiyu was the unconventional demon king with both prestige and cultivation abound. They were complete opposites of each other.

But he happened to meet...

Chou Yongzhou.

While he was reminiscing over these past events, the youth in front of him suddenly twitched. The pill furnace in his hands immediately exploded, sending black smoke pouring out. But the youth didn't seem to mind. In

fact, he might've deliberately blown it up. He asked, "What is Zhenren thinking about?"

Chou Yongzhou: "I'm thinking of a friend."

"No you're not." Tong Guiyu suddenly declared.

Even though he had not grown up cultivating the Harmony Path, he had a keen intuition for reading the emotions of those around him.

"You were thinking of someone you like."

The youth's words were so straightforward that Chou Yongzhou was momentarily left at a loss. It was quite a while before he rolled up his sleeves, pouring out the dark ash in the pill furnace and refilling it with herbs. "Nonsense."

Tong Guiyu propped his chin on his hands, his peach blossom eyes narrowing as he scrutinized the other. His features were naturally charming, and even the corners of his eyes could convey some unspeakable emotion. He could create an illusion of deep affection just by glancing at others.

Many people had suffered under this gaze of his

But Chou Yongzhou wasn't one of them. Hun Yuan Xianjun rarely looked at him like that. That man had willingly...nearly succumbed to a qi deviation. He had fallen in love at first sight.

Chou Yongzhou was actually a little embarrassed to say that out loud. He had confessed in the first place so that he wouldn't regret it later. He never thought that Tong Guiyu's Dao heart would become unstable because of him.

The youth's incessant staring made him somewhat distracted. His finger paused for a moment by the pill furnace. That was all the time it took for a light burn mark to appear on the underside of a pale digit.

High temperatures needed to be maintained during pill refining. Even those from Yao Wang Valley needed to be careful.

Chou Yongzhou retracted his hand and briefly looked up. Before he could do anything, his wrist was seized by the youth across from him. The wound was quickly treated and banadaged with evident skill.

Tong Guiyu's incomparably beautiful peach blossom eyes returned to Chou Yongzhou the moment he was done. There seemed to be only a single desire lurking deep within.

"Shoot...I forgot to blow on it earlier. Then it won't hurt."

Chou Yongzhou's heart skipped a beat. He didn't know what was wrong with him, but his mind was too frazzled to even complete a single train of thought.

He twisted his wrist to free his fingers. "It's fine..."

Despite his reassurance, the other person insisted on leaning over.

Tong Guiyu realized very early on that he was good looking, as well as how to fully use this to his advantage. Chou Yongzhou could only watch him come closer and drawl, "Have I met Zhenren before, long ago?"

'Met' was too light a word to describe it.

Chou Yongzhou stopped breathing. He slowly replied, "...No."

"I don't believe you." This person was very straightforward, even refuting the answer to the question he had asked. He came closer and closer until they were almost face to face, until he could easily brush his lips against another pair.

Chou Yongzhou heard him ask softly, "Zhenren treats me differently from others... You must like me."

He had never seen such an arrogant person.

...He had never seen someone who could read him like the back of his hand either.

All of his innermost thoughts, all of the days and nights he had waited for another person, all of the times he restrained himself endured, all of the pessimistic thoughts that plagued him...

All of it was meticulously laid out in the open by Tong Guiyu.

The other's insight was simply too profound.

In the end, the youth carelessly tossed aside the pill furnace that had already cooled, before pinning Huai Qing Zhenren down on the bamboo mat. His eyes were slightly curved with an almost imperceptible sense of humour.

"How could we have not met?" Tong Guiyu said, "That Heart Cleansing Pill..."

His fingers moved from Chou Yongzhou's neck to point at his chest before continuing downwards, finally pausing at a point.

"Zhenren should take it instead." The smugness at being right in his voice was too harsh and grating. Even if his words were affectionate, they provided no comfort. "After all, you think of me every night."

Outside, the wind could be heard blowing through the forest, scattering bamboo leaves everywhere.

—-

Three hundred years later, after the marriage ceremony.

Jiang Yinghe returned to Tong Guiyu the Hongyan sword that he had kept for many years. He remarked good-naturedly, "I really didn't expect you to be so gutsy. Only you would be like this, only you."

Momentarily speechless, Tong Guiyu took the excitedly ringing Hongyan sword. "If I knew back then about what would happen now, I wouldn't have gone so far when scolding him."

Jiang Yinghe's gossip senses were tingling. He wanted to abstain at first, but Tong Guiyu's expression was too tempting. "What exactly did you say?"

"Sigh...I was too foolhardy back then." Hun Yuan Xianjun covered his eyes with his hands to collect himself before continuing, "I said that he secretly had a crush on me."

That wasn't too bad by itself. But he went too far afterwards, saying things like how the other person's body thirsted for him, how he was a liar that clearly desired him and only superficially upright.

All in all, he unknowingly shamed his cultivation partner.

"That's not too terrible." Jiang Yinghe missed the deeper implications entirely. "Another thing, he taught you how to heal and save lives, so how did you learn a bunch of poison techniques? Are you considering cultivating that path for your Dao heart?"

Tong Guiyu thought for a long time before replying, "No, I will cultivate the Harmony Path."

Jiang Yinghe paused, suddenly recalling the words Abbot Chan Qing had said before he passed away.

"My Dao heart is unstable because of my incomplete passion root. Its very foundation was flawed. Like you, only reincarnation was enough to repair it." Tong Guiyu said, "The techniques of the Harmony Path have been stigmatized for too long."

Jiang Yinghe understood what he meant, yet he still glanced up at Chou Yongzhou who was talking to Wang Mengzhou not far away. He pondered and said, "It will not be easy to go against the traditional Harmony Path and pave your own."

"But maybe mine is the right one."

After saying that, Tong Guiyu took out a medicine bottle from his Qiankun bag and handed it to Jiang Yinghe with a mysterious smile. "This is the fruit of all my research over the years at Yao Wang Valley. I've incorporated my experience at the He Huan Sect as well. It's your only hope to turn things around."

Jiang Yinghe was taken aback, but he quickly accepted it. Although he had eventually accepted his role in the relationship, tiny embers of rebellion still burned on the inside. A slight desire slowly rose in his heart.

"...Who is this for?"

"Naturally, it's for Lord Dao Ancestor." Tong Guiyu said in a serious manner. "How else will you be able to push him down."

Jiang Yinghe nodded with understanding, his heart filled with trust for his long-time friend. He patted Tong Guiyu on the shoulder and asked, "Does it temporarily seal his cultivation? Or does it make him soft when aroused?"

Tong Guiyu: "You'll find out when you use it."

The two of them went on to have a good conversation. After they finished discussing these cough ideas, cough, they said their goodbyes and took their respective cultivation partners home.

Tong Guiyu was in a good mood the entire way back. When Chou Yongzhou asked him about it, he gave an account of the conversation he had just had with the Sword Immortal. He took out another bottle from his Qiankun pouch and handed it to Chou Yongzhou. "This is something else entirely. The Nine Yang Aphrodisiac Pill can..."

"Wait a minute." Chou Yongzhou interrupted him and showed him the name on the medicine bottle. "That's not the name written here."

Tong Guiyu's thoughts suddenly crashed to a halt. He immediately inspected the bottle only to see it contained a medicine with the opposite properties. His mind was buzzing.

...Did I give the wrong one?

...Did I just give a yang-enhancing medicine to Little He and instruct him to let the Dao Ancestor take it?

Hiss.

Tong Guiyu drew in a breath of cold air. Holding his partner's hand, he calmly asked, "Do you have anything you want to bring? Go back and pack quickly. Don't say a word to anyone. We have to leave today or else it'll be too late."

Chou Yongzhou didn't quite understand for a moment. He asked, "...Are things really this serious?"

"Definitely."

Tong Guiyu said extremely seriously, "If I make trouble for Li Junye, Little He will stop him from murdering me. But if I make trouble for Little He, he can chase and slash me with Wangchen and let Li Junye finish the job if he gets tired."

He patted his cultivation partner's hand and said painfully, "No friendship is more important than your life."

Chou Yongzhou: "..."

Author's Corner

For more details about the aphrodisiac see my Weibo: @ You have to follow to see.

Don't give me the cold shoulder because I only have a bicycle. After sitting on my bike, you have to give me good reviews QAQ (five star glowing reviews for full marks, you can give a rating on the novel page after marking it as complete).

Rain

Ta-da! The final part is here! :3

Enjoy the rest of your weekend~

Sahl

It's goodbye to Jiang Yinghe and his true love/s from Rain and I. We really hope you guys enjoyed this story! Don't forget our other project if you like what we do!

OceanofPDF.com